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Election choice is smiles or tears says Major

By Philip Webster, Political Editor

JOHN MAJOR staked out the ground for a presidential-style general election campaign yesterday, accusing Tony Blair of hypocrisy over beggars and inviting voters to choose between "smiles and tears".

He reacted furiously to Mr Blair's endorsement of the "zero tolerance" approach to minor criminals, saying the Labour leader had accused him of being petty and vindictive for promising action on the problem. "Labour's hypocritical beggars belief," he said. "It's a policy of zero detail and zero honesty."

But Mr Blair's aides swiftly countered with the claim that he, too, had favoured tough action against aggressive beggars two years ago.

Likely poll dates

Election planners in all parties have ruled three dates on the calendar for the general election.

The bitter exchanges marked the start of campaigning in earnest for a poll expected on March 20, April 10 or May 1. Mr Blair, who is said to be happy to take on the Prime Minister in a head-to-head contest, will make his new year pitch today with a document setting out the priorities for a Labour government.

The document will emphasise Mr Blair's achievements since becoming his party's leader and contrast them with what it says is Mr Major's weak leadership of a party incapable of being led. "Our claim is that Blair gets things done because he is in charge of his party and that Major gets things done to him because his party is out of control," a Labour strategist said.

Yesterday, however, Mr Major was in confident form at the first of a series of White House-style press conferences. The three great issues for the election would be the economy, Europe and Labour's plans for constitutional reform, he said. He promised to pilot the economy to success.

freeing up more funds for education and health; he would preside over cautious constitutional change, while protecting the integrity of the UK; and he would keep Britain in a more flexible European Union.

The outlook for jobs, prosperity and growth was "sparkling", but Labour would put that at risk, he said. "We have a choice economically between smiles and tears. I hope and believe that the election choice that people will choose is the smiles and avoid the tears." It would be "very foolish" if the extremely bright outlook were thrown away.

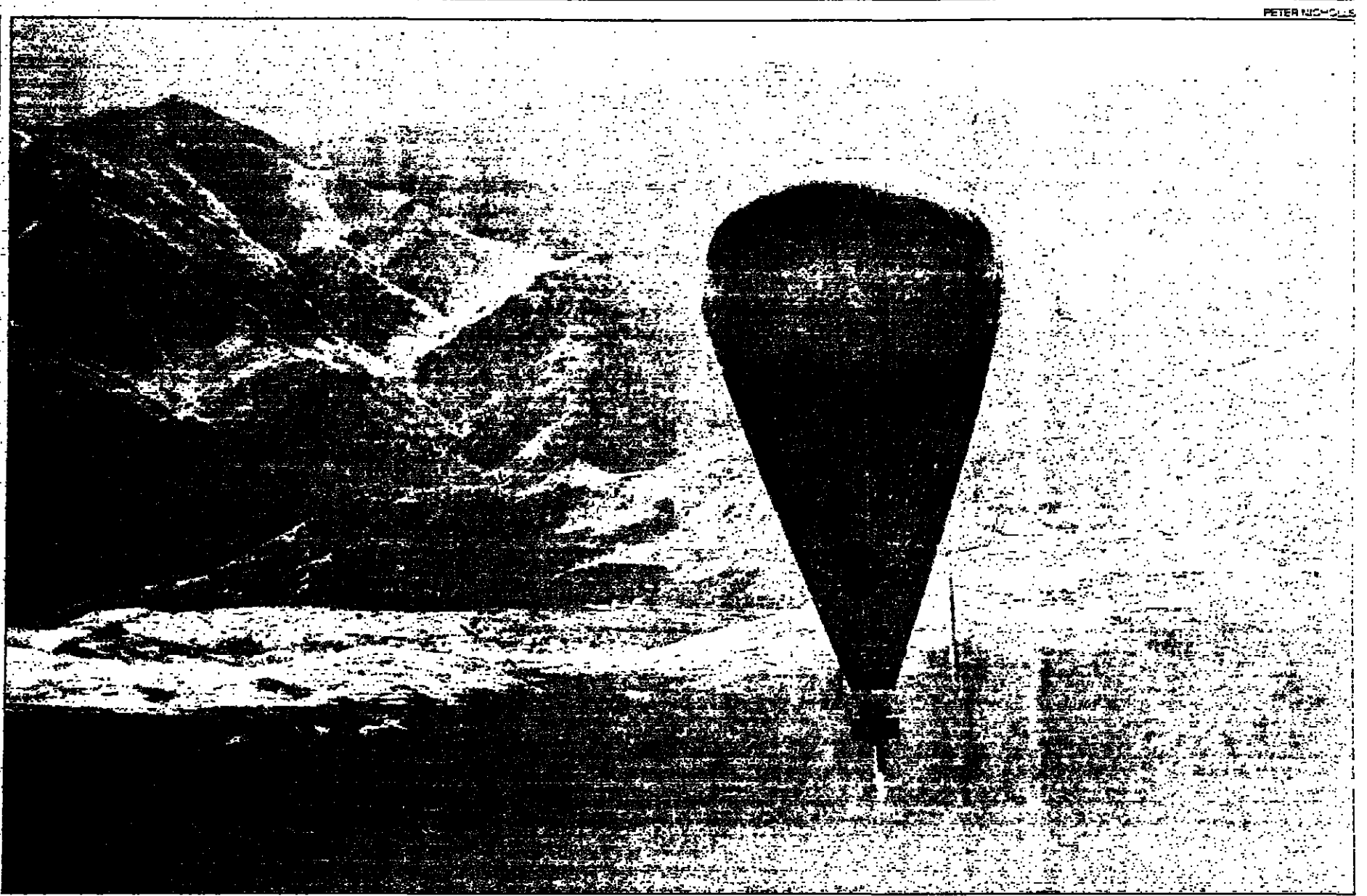
"On Europe, there was no question of Britain ever withdrawing," he said. "There would be no 'clever dodge' to change the Government's wait-and-see policy towards the single currency — although he has not privately ruled out toughening the stance before election day."

Friends said later that Mr Major's relaxed mood came from his relief that the election was approaching and his determination to take control of events. There will be more carefully stage-managed occasions such as yesterday's, and today he will seek to emphasise his statesman role when he leaves for a six-day tour of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Nice little earner, page 4



"I hate the way these politicians have to beg for people's votes"



Against the backdrop of the Atlas mountains, Richard Branson's Virgin Challenger sets off on its epic voyage. There was perfect weather and a carnival atmosphere at lift-off

Branson takes off without his 'insurance'

FROM ANDREW PIERCE IN MARRAKESH

RICHARD BRANSON'S attempt to be the first man to fly a balloon non-stop around the world was launched yesterday as his towering 200ft helium Virgin Challenger rose against the snow-capped Atlas mountains.

The balloon took off at 11.18am with Mr Branson, 46, Per Lindstrand, 46, and their 11th-hour substitute co-pilot, Alex Ritchie, on board. Mr Branson's "insurance policy", Rory McCarthy, 36, the world civilian skydiving champion, had to stay behind because of a lung infection which doctors feared could turn to pneumonia.

As the only one of the crew who has jumped from a balloon at a height of 35,000ft, Mr McCarthy would have been responsible for Mr Branson's safety in the event of abandoning the craft by parachute.

Mr Ritchie's wife, Jill, a primary school teacher in Harwich, Essex, said that she had not yet come to terms with the 6.45am telephone call from her husband to break the news. He had had more difficulty with his 78-year-old Glaswegian mother, Chris.

time. "When I rang her, she said, 'Tell that Mr Branson you've phoned your mother and she said you're not going anywhere.'"

A carnival atmosphere pervaded Marrakesh as the final checks were carried out to the 11.5-ton capsule and envelope. More than 100 traditional Berber dancers chanted, cheered, banged drums and clashed cymbals during a six-hour countdown from dawn until take-off. Horsemen with ceremonial muskets paraded the Union Jack and helicopters hovered overhead.

In the ancient pink-walled city, Moroccans danced in the street and pointed to the sky as the balloon made its stately progress southwest over the

Atlas Mountains towards Algeria at the start of a voyage that could take it 24,000 miles.

King Hassan of Morocco watched the launch from his palace at Rabat after putting his air force and gendarmerie at Mr Branson's disposal.

There were emotional scenes at the launch site as Mr Branson bade farewell to his family. He hugged his wife Joan, 50, and said: "Love you, see you in a few weeks." As Mrs Branson wiped away tears, he said to his daughter Holly, 14: "Good luck at school." Sam, his 11-year-old son, clung to his father as he prepared to board the capsule which is to be his home for the next three weeks. Mr Branson embraced his son and told

him: "I will be OK. Don't worry. Don't forget to cut the grass at home ready for my return."

Mrs Branson, who has expressed misgivings about her husband's most daring adventure so far, said after the launch: "I am feeling very, very nervous. We are all numb. None of us know what to think." Mr Branson's parents, Eve, 78, and Ted, 79, also watched the launch.

What is believed to be the biggest balloon ever built — Mr Lindstrand designed and built it at his factory in Oswestry, Shropshire — rose at a rate of 1,500ft a minute for the first 10,000ft after dawn heralded perfect weather for the long-awaited ascent. Eight

hours after take-off, Mr Branson and his team were still heading for the jet stream that would propel them from a steady 30mph to 120mph. Staff at the "command centre" in Kensington said that Mr Branson was hoping to hit the jet stream just off Algeria.

A spokesman for the organisation said: "If all goes to plan, he should be skirting the east coast of Africa at 30,000ft this morning having travelled around 2,000 miles."

The only conversation that has taken place between the three men in the balloon and people on the ground was between Mr Lindstrand and his colleagues at his office. He was heard to ask them where they had stored the toilet paper "because Alex could not find it".

Trackers' task, page 3
High adventure, page 15
Landing article and letters, page 17



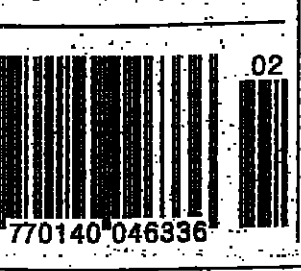
Richard Branson, with all the final checks made, waves farewell to his wife, Joan

MP Hayes sues

Lawyers for MP Jerry Hayes have served a libel writ on the News of the World over claims about a gay affair.

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Rescuers may reach lone British yachtsman today

By Edward Gorman in London and Roger Maynard in Sydney

RESCUERS were increasingly confident yesterday that the British solo yachtsman Tony Bullimore, who is missing in the Southern Ocean, is alive and awaiting rescue after the capsizing of his boat on Sunday.

Yesterday the Australian Air Force again flew over both his yacht, *Exide Challenger*, and that of Frenchman Thierry Dubois, who capsized ten miles away in a position about 1,400 miles southwest of Perth. Both yachts are upside down and Bullimore has lost its keel. Rescuers hope to reach both men today or tomorrow. Although there was no sign of Bullimore during repeated

low-level passes by the RAAF Orion aircraft, the organisers of the Vendée Globe single-handed non-stop round-the-world race believe that he is inside the hull and alive.

Philippe Jeantot, the race director, said in Paris that Bullimore had three emergency radio beacons on board his 60ft yacht. One was on deck in a box next to his survival kit and the liferaft. This had not been switched on, suggesting Bullimore had not tried to use his liferaft. The second is also on deck and is working, but was transmitting in normal mode. This is giving a position about 15 miles from the up-

turned hull yesterday, suggesting it may have been ripped off when the boat capsized.

The third is inside the boat and it is this one which Bullimore has switched on to alarm mode after the capsizing, something which can only be done manually, indicating very strongly that he is sheltering inside the hull.

The Australian navy frigate *Adelaide*, which is steaming to the area, has been slowed by the difficult conditions. The plan is to launch the ship's helicopter as soon as it is in range and try to pick up the men.

Gingrich wins fight to remain Speaker

FROM BRONWEN MADDOX IN WASHINGTON

NEWT GINGRICH last night won his fight to remain Speaker of America's House of Representatives, the first Republican to be re-elected to the post in 68 years.

He triumphed after two weeks of intense lobbying, despite ethical questions hanging over him and the opposition of a handful of leading Republicans.

Democrats said later that they regarded him as damaged goods, and that his position would be further undermined during the next two weeks, as ethics committee hearings reveal further details of charges against him. The Speaker normally has

power to set the legislative agenda but Democrats, who plan to harry Mr Gingrich, speculated that he might be forced to resign within months.

Mr Gingrich won 216 votes compared to 205 for Richard Gephardt, leader of the House Democrats. Four Republicans voted for other candidates. Although Mr Gingrich won a majority of those present, he did not get a majority of the total 435 members of the House. But a Democratic challenge on those grounds was rejected by the clerk of the House.

Gingrich apology, page 10

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Campaign chiefs from all parties have pencilled in three election options

Major plays the tease over his date with voters

By Philip Webster and Arthur Leathley

CAMPAIGN planners in all the political parties have ringed three possible general election dates on their calendars. If the poll is not held on March 20, April 10 or May 1, John Major will have again surprised them all.

Yesterday the Prime Minister predicted that, when the time came, it would be a "lot of fun". And he teased that "a bit of pleasure deferred is a greater pleasure", without intending any hint as to the day he will choose. The three dates have their supporters at all levels of his party.

In recent weeks Tory strategists, Cabinet ministers and backbenchers have been heard stoutly defending the merits of them all. If anything, the April 10 option appears to be hardening at Conservative Central Office: equally there is nothing to suggest that Mr Major has moved from his personal preference of May 1.

Each date appears to have its attractions for leading Tories, whether they are pessimistic or optimistic about their chances. Optimists such as Mr Major favour May 1 because it offers the longest possible time to maximise the attack on Labour. The pessimists believe that a poll then is the only way of saving the remnants of the Tory local

government base: local elections are on the same day and a general election will at least bring out activists who might not bother if the party is already out of government.

The March 20 optionists believe that Mr Major can retain control of events, by going at a time of his choosing rather than having to hold on to the last possible moment. The pessimists feel that, given the record of recent years, the longer the Parliament goes the worse it will be for the Tories.

An important factor is the meeting of the Conservative Central Council — the second most important Tory gathering of the year — in Bath on March 14 and 15. If an election has not been called by then, Mr Major will be under huge pressure to spell out his intentions.

By the end of February he could have called an election for April 10 and be able to use the council as a rallying point during the campaign. Alternatively he could announce a May 1 poll and use the meeting as a springboard for a six-week campaign.

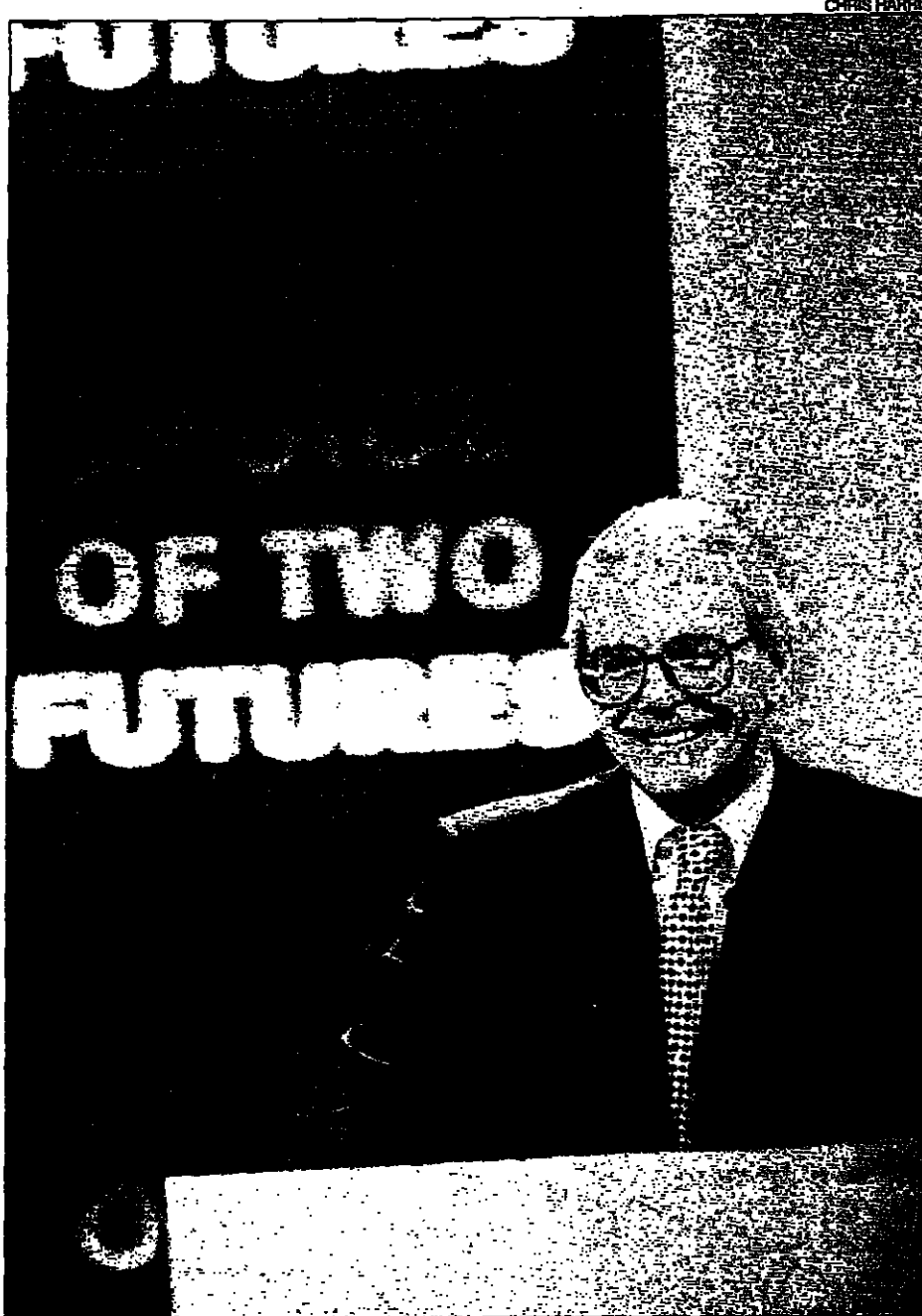
The keenest interest in the dates is being shown by the Tory leadership contenders and their coteries. If the Tories lose, the date will be crucial to whether a leader-

ship election is held swiftly or left until the autumn. Supporters of John Redwood, who challenged Mr Major in 1995, believe that their man will have the best chance in a poll before the summer recess.

If the Tories lose heavily, Mr Major might want to go quickly, but party elders will want him to hang on until the autumn to allow for an orderly transition and other candidates to get their campaigns running. A Tory party leadership election cannot take place until at least three months after the assembly of the new Parliament. If the general election is on March 20, Parliament would assemble very early in April, allowing for a new Tory leader to be chosen in July.

The "Stop Redwood" Tories might therefore prefer a later date: April 10 or May 1 would almost certainly rule out a leadership contest before the summer recess. Stephen Dorrell, Michael Howard, Malcolm Rifkind, Michael Portillo, Michael Heseltine, Gillian Shephard and Kenneth Clarke would have a busier holiday than usual.

Mr Major had no such thoughts yesterday. He said that he was looking forward to the next campaign after five more years in government.



Will it be March, April or May? An ebullient John Major kept the country guessing yesterday at the first of his presidential-style press conferences

From No 10 to Bustee No 162 as PM plays the great game

By Christopher Thomas in Delhi and Philip Webster, Political Editor

FROM Calcutta to the Khyber, people are preparing for John Major. The Prime Minister will risk the inevitable "Carry On" headlines when he visits the Khyber Pass, gateway to the Indian subcontinent, as part of his six-day tour of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, which starts today.

In Calcutta he will see a collection of uncommonly smart huts known as Bustee Number 162 just off Picnic Garden in Kipling's City of Darkest Night, whose residents are being taught "Good morning, sir" and "Thank you".

These are no ordinary huts: there are no festering rubbish tips here, no rats, no stinking drains. The British taxpayer, through the Overseas Development Administration, has been funding a beautification drive. Mr Major may catch a whiff of the real city beyond, but he will not be allowed to see it at close hand.

Next week he will head to the Khyber Pass in Pakistan. The tribesmen he will see lugging rifles through the dusty village streets know nothing but tribal law; they are aggressive, independent and acutely aware of their role in defeating the British when they foolishly ventured beyond the Khyber into Afghanistan in the last century.

This is the heart of the Great Game, as Kipling called the battle for influence between Russia and Britain. It still bears the insignia of British regiments painted on the rocks, survivors of sand storms, monsoons and heat. This is where invaders poured into India for centuries, from Afghanistan and Central Asia: a gateway to war. Mr Major might spot a rabbit skin swinging outside one or two shophouses, inside, slabs of marijuana as big as loaves will be on sale.

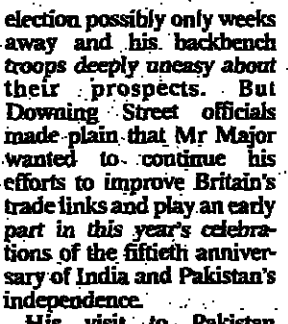
If he had more time he might take a trip to the nearby town of Darra, where Afriidi tribesmen make copies of Kalashnikovs, handguns, rocket launchers and other weapons for terrorist wars around the region.

Mr Major leaves London equipped with nothing more

threatening than an army of business people, although there will be more of them than have ever accompanied the Prime Minister before. The 50-strong team will include Sir Iain Vallance, of BT; Robert Ayling, of British Airways; and Adair Turner, Director-General of the Confederation of British Industry, as well as Jan Lang, the President of the Board of Trade.

In Calcutta tomorrow Mr Major is expected to address an audience of 10,000 delegates at a Confederation of Indian Industry conference.

The Prime Minister has surprised many of his political and government advisers by taking off on a long-distance trip with the



election possibly only weeks away and his backbench troops deeply uneasy about their prospects. But Downing Street officials made plain that Mr Major wanted to continue his efforts to improve Britain's trade links and play an early part in this year's celebrations of the fiftieth anniversary of India and Pakistan's independence.

His visit to Pakistan comes at a deeply sensitive time, with elections pending after the ousting of Benazir Bhutto's government. Mr Major is determined to take an even-handed approach and is expected to meet Mrs Bhutto, her main rival, Nawaz Sharif, the former prime minister, and Nerraj Khalid, the caretaker prime minister.

There are no plans for Mr Major to see another of the candidates in the Pakistani election: Imran Khan, the former Test cricketer and son-in-law of Sir James Goldsmith, leader of the Referendum Party.



The Khyber Pass looking towards Afghanistan, where John Major may meet armed tribesmen

MARCH 20

FOR John Major looks to be in charge of events and, by starting the campaign almost immediately, he can build up momentum seamlessly. Reduces Labour opportunities for using the breakdown of MPs' pairing arrangements in the Commons to inflict defeats and even force a confidence vote. Counters suggestions that Tories are "running scared" and spikes guns of Opposition parties demanding a by-election in Wirral South, which has been vacant since November. Pessimists warn that dragging on until May will alienate floating voters and increase margin of Tory defeat. Introduces an element of surprise, albeit mild.

AGAINST Election defeat in March or April would deter Tory activists from campaigning towards May 1 elections for local councils, where party is already at an all-time low. Early dissolution of Parliament could sabotage key pieces of contentious legislation such as the Firearms Bill, Police (Sentences) Bill, and even the Budget-enacting Finance Bill if they face serious opposition and run out of Parliamentary time. Poor weather likely to blight campaign and deter elderly voters — who are more likely to vote Tory — from turning out to polling stations. Would force the party to cancel Conservative Central Council meeting planned for March 14 and 15.

APRIL 10

FOR Expected to reduce Labour-dominated student vote in several key Tory marginals as undergraduates are at home during the Easter holiday. Allows John Major to use the mid-March Conservative Central Council meeting as a springboard to the campaign. Such a move would mirror the tactics of the 1992 general election, when Mr Major used the Central Council as the campaign launchpad days after announcing the election date. Allows lengthy election campaign and the hope of echoing the success of April 9 in 1992, in which Major's campaigning tactics helped to confound pollsters' predictions of a Labour victory. If called early enough, say the beginning of March, it would snuff out rising Opposition demands for a by-election to be held in the vacant Wirral South.

AGAINST Will come as millions of home-owners on annually reviewed mortgages receive higher bills, negating "feel-good" factor. Defeat in March or April threatens a double-whammy in sapping Tory morale in advance of May 1 local elections, in which the party will start from a low point after the corresponding 1993 council poll. Some strategists argue that fears over the local elections are defeatist. Senior Tories are nervous about the effectiveness of campaigning around Easter, when many voters are away on holiday.

MAY 1

FOR Pessimists expecting a big Tory defeat favour this date as the way of getting out Tory voters for local elections on the same day and preventing a Conservative wipe-out in town halls. Stretches resources of the Liberal Democrats, who face heavy commitments defending council seats, limiting their ability to concentrate on "target" parliamentary seats. Optimists say the date offers maximum time for expected economic improvement to show. Will come after voters receive first benefits of income tax cuts in April pay packets. Gives Government more time to complete legislative programme. Better weather for campaigning and encouraging voters to turn out.

AGAINST Interest rate rises expected over coming two months will have fed through to mortgages during late March and April. Europe will become a more dominant, and potentially divisive issue as European Union leaders prepare for the Amsterdam summit in June. John Major would be seen as taking almost the last possible date, reinforcing the image of a beleaguered government clinging on for dear life. The longer he delays an election, the more likely he is to go into a Commons minority, whether by death or defection. Labour pressure for Wirral South by-election will have intensified in the run-up to the campaign.

Lack of inspiration evident in echoes of past failure

THE Tories could hardly say "better the devil you know" after their demonic eyes poster last summer. But that was the essence of the long pre-election campaign they launched yesterday. Contrasting the Tories' record and experience with the uncertainties and dangers of an untried Labour team may register with voters. It might not be a bad case for a Government seeking a second, or even third, term, but I doubt if it will be sufficient for one wanting an unprecedented fifth successive term.

John Major personifies the strengths and weaknesses of

the Tory appeal. He gave a confident and relaxed performance in the first of his pre-election press conferences. He was the pragmatic manager, the man who knows how to cope with the vicissitudes of an unpredictable world. He was persuasive on Northern Ireland, Europe and the economy. He is always better as the reasonable head of government than as the sometimes strident party leader.

Mr Major presented his Stanley Baldwin side, the safe pair of hands. Indeed, there were clear echoes of Baldwin's "Safety First" slogan during

RIDDELL ON POLITICS

the 1929 election in the Tories' talk yesterday about ensuring that "stability and prosperity" continue. The snag is that this can sound complacent. After all, the Tories lost in 1929.

Admittedly, the new Tory poster campaign, "New Labour, it would all end in tears", highlights the Opposition's vulnerability on tax and public spending and on constitutional reform. It is a legitimate question to ask whether a Blair government would take

the tough economic decisions that the Tories implemented.

But managerialism is not enough. The Tories lost the benefit of the doubt with the public after the trauma that followed Black Wednesday. The Tories cannot just rely on fear of the unknown — "smiles not tears". Mr Major was coy about his plans for the next Parliament, saying they would emerge later. He has previously said that ordinary voters are not interested in the radical ideas that fascinate the

pundits but primarily want competence and stability.

These objectives are obviously a pre-condition for any government's success, but the Tories need to offer more positive reasons for keeping the party in office. How would the party use power? Mr Major noted yesterday that it had been "hellishly difficult" to cut public spending and more unpopular decisions would be needed. But what does this mean for the welfare state? Would a re-elected Tory Government challenge spending programmes which particularly benefit the middle

classes? How far would it extend choice in schools?

In short, what has been missing in Mr Major's recent performances — and in the Tory campaign — is a spark of inspiration and excitement, an answer to the "time for a change" argument. It is not enough for Mr Major to claim that good times have at last come and they should not be put at risk now. The public needs to have an idea of what a Tory Britain would be like in five years' time. More of the same is not enough.

PETER RIDDELL

Britain urged to give ground in EU talks

From Charles Bremner in the Hague

JOHN MAJOR was urged by European leaders last night to press ahead with negotiations for revamping the European Union treaty or face blame for undermining its historic mission to take in the countries of the former Communist bloc.

The message of urgency was emphasised repeatedly by Jacques Santer, President of the European Commission, as Mr Major arrived for talks with Wim Kok, the Dutch Prime Minister. Mr Kok, who has just taken over the chair of the EU's rotating presidency, was seeking to persuade Mr Major to give some ground at the inter-governmental conference (IGC), the negotiation to revamp the Maastricht treaty. The EU is worried that the



Santer sticking to his enlargement strategy

British elections could make it impossible to finish the treaty until late in the year.

"We want to negotiate very seriously with the British Government in the few months ahead of us," Mr Kok said.

"We are not going to just sit back and wait to see what happens after the elections. We cannot afford the luxury of losing time."

The IGC is due to close with a new treaty at an Amsterdam summit in June, preparing the EU for expansion to take in up to 11 new members early in the next century. The treaty will start the countdown to membership talks within six months with countries from central Europe.

Mr Kok said that it would be "unforgivable" to imply that Britain was the only obstacle to completing the new treaty, because the other 14 states are widely divided on key issues. However, he and Mr Santer made clear that Britain was the main obstacle to a new treaty. Among other things, Britain is alone in

opposing any dilution of the national veto and measures to harmonise border and crime policy. Mr Major was telling Mr Kok that he was keeping all bridges open to the EU and Britain would stay active at the negotiations, but it would not yield on any of the demands which it has laid down.

Mr Santer noted that Europe had an historic mission to end the division created by the Cold War and embrace the countries to the east. He recalled that Britain was a strong supporter of enlargement. "We are sticking to the strategy of enlargement," he said. "This is the last chance. Let us not allow ourselves to become paralysed by elections in a member state."

Mr Kok said that he had invited Mr Major to try to find areas in which Britain could

negotiate to clear some of the IGC obstacles before the election. Formally launching the Dutch presidency of the EU, he promised to work for a new treaty that deepened integration in all fields, from employment policy to crime-fighting and foreign policy.

The key to the future shape of Europe would be machinery for a flexible union, he said. "It is necessary to prevent slower countries from holding back those that want to move ahead more quickly."

Mr Kok said he would tell Mr Major that he believed a multispeed scheme would answer British objections. The Government has given qualified support to such proposals but it refuses to give up the right to veto the creation of groups seeking closer integration.

Prime Minister denies seeking EMU 'dodge'

By Jill Sherman, Chief Political Correspondent

JOHN MAJOR insisted yesterday that he was not looking for some "clever dodge" to change the Government's wait-and-see policy on joining a single currency.

The Prime Minister said he would not budge from the Cabinet policy of keeping open Britain's options on joining the first wave of economic monetary union. But he made clear

that if other European Union countries wanted to judge the economic criteria for proceeding with a single currency, Britain would advise them not to go ahead, and would certainly not join them if they did.

That would be damaging for Europe as a whole if the scheme went ahead on that basis, Mr Major said at his press conference.

The Prime Minister is still under pressure from several Cabinet ministers to take a tougher line on EMU and

to rule out Britain's entry in a first wave before the general election. But yesterday he signalled that Britain would be unable to judge the economic criteria until the end of this year or the beginning of next, a line recently pushed by Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Mr Major said that the Cabinet was exploring the best basis on which to judge whether economic criteria were being fudged and that a report would be produced by the Treasury within

four weeks. Some of his colleagues are hoping that he will be able to use the report to rule out a single currency at the eleventh hour, if there is evidence that this could make a crucial difference to the election result.

He hoped for progress on EU matters at last night's talks with Wim Kok, Prime Minister of the Netherlands, which holds the EU presidency. However, Mr Major said he would reiterate a number of points that Britain could not accept.

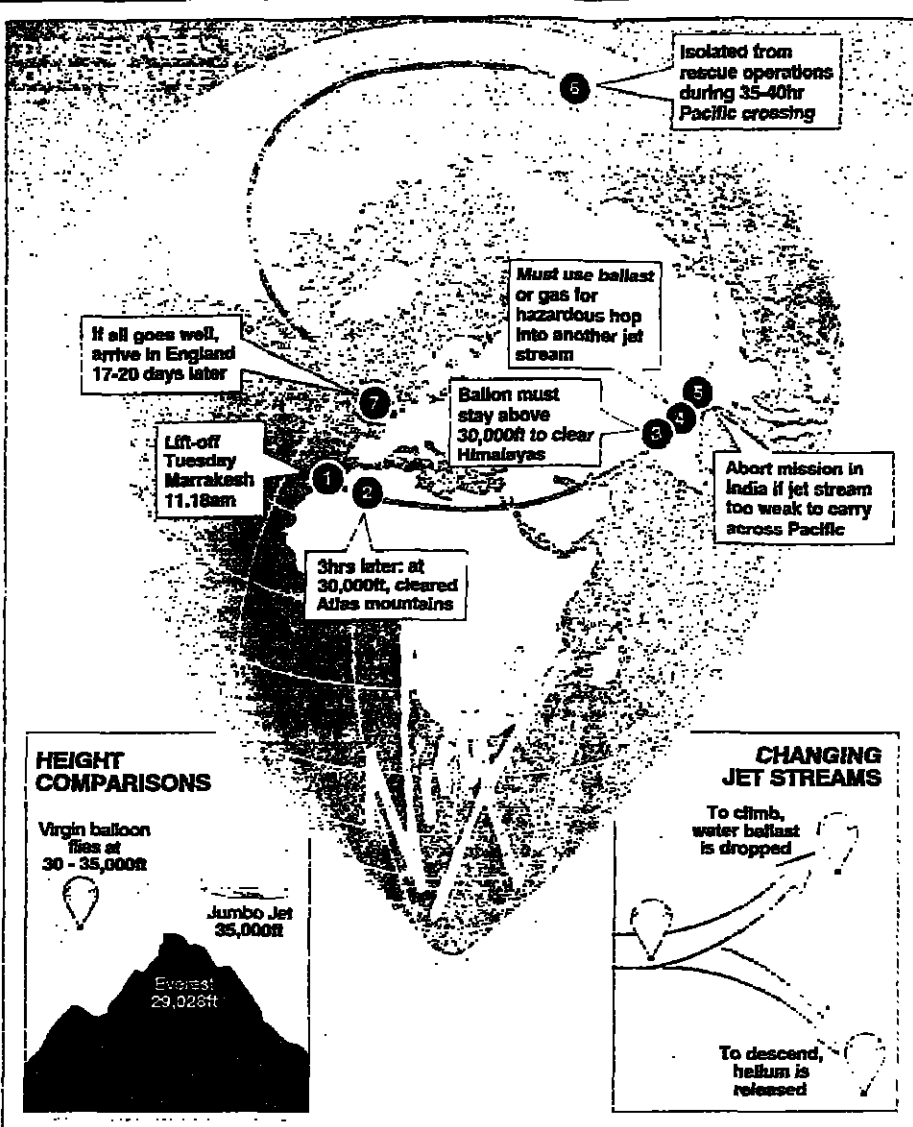
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This trip is like juggling soot underwater, blindfold. Not knowing where you'll land is the romance



Richard Branson bidding farewell to his wife Joan, son Sam and daughter Holly. "Love you, see you in a few weeks," was his message to his wife. Wiping away tears he told his daughter: "Good luck at school this term"



Branson clears first hurdle heading into 250mph winds

By KATHRYN KNIGHT

FROM the moment that *Global Challenger* left the ground at 11.16am yesterday, it was being precisely monitored thousands of miles away by communication and aviation experts in a hotel room in west London.

For them, the balloon's rise signalled the start of up to three weeks of constant tracking and liaison with the three-man crew. Up to a dozen people will work round the clock in the three-room command centre on the ninth floor of the Royal Garden Hotel in Kensington.



Rory McCarthy with Richard Branson after he learnt he would not make the trip; Alex Ritchie, who is replacing him; and his wife Jill, who could not believe the news

"He sounded excited but was obviously trying to suppress it. I had very mixed feelings. I was so shocked at first as it was so unexpected. Then I thought of the poor chap who has had to drop out. And of course you cannot avoid a

certain amount of worry." It was not until her son Alistair, 23, telephoned her late yesterday morning to say he had seen the balloon take off on television that the full impact of her husband's journey hit her. "I was relieved to hear it

had taken off, as I felt the first hurdle had been safely cleared, but then I thought, 'Good gracious, he's up there.' The balloon will cross 70 countries. Last year, when the voyage was called off because of poor weather, the Virgin

team had failed to secure permission to cross the airspace of Libya and China. This time approval has been granted for all countries. After takeoff the *Challenger* entered jetstreams at 30,000ft where winds of up to 250mph

will carry it from west to east, without the crew feeling they are moving. There is a fear that when it crosses Canada it could be sucked into the Arctic. As the balloon gained its flying height of between 30,000-35,000ft, its first tricky

manoeuvre was over the Atlas mountains. Having cleared them, the crew's aim was to force their way into a jetstream to carry them east. Ninety minutes after *Challenger* took off a Cessna Citation jet, which will track

the balloon with a six-man technical and television crew, took off from Marrakesh.

In the London control room, a modem flashes the latitude and longitude of the balloon to within three metres every 30 seconds, via a global positioning satellite.

Yet despite the technology, the fundamental unpredictability of the exercise lends an edginess to the command centre. "You can plan the route to a certain extent, but really, this balloon trip is like juggling soot underwater, blindfold," Mark Lockwood, the project co-ordinator, said. "But that's the romance of ballooning. Who knows where it will end up?"

High adventure, page 15
Leading article, and
Letters, page 17

Mock hangings for jail hostages

By AUDREY MAGRE, IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

PRISON officers were subjected to mock hangings as they were held hostage by prisoners during a three-day siege at Mountjoy jail in Dublin. The crisis ended peacefully late on Monday, but the four officers were being treated for trauma yesterday.

John Loneragan, the prison governor, said the men had suffered greatly at the hands of the six inmates involved. The prisoners, who include Paul Ward, charged with conspiring to murder the Irish journalist Veronica Guerin, devised numerous ways of threatening the officers over a 50-hour period. On Monday they forced two officers to stand on a table and put nooses around their necks. They counted down to a hanging and said they would kill the men unless their demands were met.

The prisoners were armed with metal chair legs and a blood-filled syringe, a clear threat in a prison where Aids and drug abuse are rife. According to prison sources, all six prisoners are intravenous drug users and at least two are believed to be HIV-positive. They requested, and were given, a legally prescribed heroin substitute during the hostage crisis.

Tom Hoare, spokesman of

the Prison Officers' Association, said the six prisoners were very volatile and dangerous individuals. They were housed in a separation unit within the prison because they argued with other prisoners and attacked prison officers. Five were serving sentences for violent crimes, including manslaughter, kidnapping and assault.

Mr Loneragan said police and the army came close on a number of occasions to storming the recreation room where the officers were being held. He said the prison negotiating team, who were trained in Edinburgh, managed to divert the crisis.

The prisoners made numerous demands. Mr Ward was protesting his innocence while the others demanded better conditions and transfers to other prisons. On Monday the prisoners threatened to kill the officers when the prison authorities refused to hand them a newspaper article outlining the methods used to storm the building.

Nora Owen, the Irish Justice Minister, said her department would conduct a full review of security at the prison. She said the six prisoners involved in the hostage taking would face "the full rigours of the law".

Hank Marvin's son found dead

By MICHAEL HORSNELL

THE estranged son of the Shadows' guitarist Hank Marvin has been found dead in his room at a YMCA hostel in north London where he lived the life of a recluse for five years.

Acquaintances of Dean Marvin, 35, the godson of Sir Cliff Richard, claimed he had died of a drug overdose in the £15-a-week room where he was found on Monday, although the cause of death will not be known until a post-mortem examination is held today. He was a solitary man in poor health who was always reluctant to speak about



Hank Marvin: shocked and saddened by death

the early 1960s when his father commanded the heights of public adulation.

Hank Marvin, 55, who divorced Dean's mother, Billie, and remarried 27 years ago before emigrating to Australia in the Eighties, was said by his British representative Brian Goode to be "very shocked and very saddened".

Mr Goode did not know when Hank Marvin, who is due to begin a lengthy concert tour of Britain in March with his son by his second marriage, last saw Dean or whether he would attend his funeral. Sir Cliff, who was rehearsing in Manchester for the opening of his musical *Heathcliff*, said: "It doesn't matter who the victim is - it's a sad indictment of society when people die in this way. It's all the more painful of course when the person is known to you and, although I haven't seen Dean since Hank's family split in the late Sixties, my sympathy goes out to his mum and dad who, I know, must be devastated."

Ben Badojo, manager of the hostel in Hornsey, said: "Dean was generally OK with everyone and seemed pleasant enough. He wasn't a bad person. I never saw his family visit or heard him talking about them."

Harrods customer 'did not notice £120,000 spent by card fraudsters'

By A STAFF REPORTER

A WEALTHY Harrods customer never noticed that criminals spent £120,000 on his credit card account in three months, a court was told yesterday.

Al Shafiq Al Hussein appeared to have "an almost limitless credit card limit", Michael Holland, for the prosecution, told Harrow Crown Court. "It was a goldmine for the fraudsters," he said. Police investigating the fraud found numerous illegal transactions had been rung up on his account. Visits to menswear stores, restaurants, supermarkets and Harrods were listed.

Mr Al Hussein was not the only person to be left out of pocket, the court was told.

Sixty-nine other customers of the Harrods leather goods department lost £85,000.

Elizabeth John, 31, a Harrods manageress from Hendon, north London, denies one charge of conspiracy to defraud. Mr Holland said Miss John's brother Koshy, 29, had admitted the charge.

He said that Miss John took home 1,500 receipts containing customers' credit card details, which were examined to identify high-limit accounts. Others in the ring encoded the information on to bogus cards and illegal transactions were carried out not only through innocent retailers but "collusive" traders - mainly in the West Midlands - were brought in on the scheme, he said.

Mr Holland said the fraudsters were

not always successful - failed transactions totalled more than £75,000. He told the jury the first hint of the fraud came in November 1993 when police, trailing a man in Birmingham in connection with another matter, saw him dump something in a waste bin. Closer examination revealed a number of Harrods receipts and counterfeit credit cards.

Similar material was found in another litter bin four months later. It was not until January 1995 that police caught up with Koshy John, and through him his sister, the jury was told.

When her home was searched the receipts and other documents were found, which she allegedly had no right to take. The trial continues.

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or see an appointed travel agent or railway station.

Labour leader's 'heartless' criticism of begging earns sympathy vote for the homeless

Blair is a nice little earner for vagrants of King's Cross

By DANIEL MCGRORY

TONY BLAIR may never put his hand in his pocket for them but the homeless of King's Cross had ample reason to be grateful to the Labour leader yesterday.

Regulars who work the station for handouts, such as John Lee, 54, were appalled that Mr Blair wants them to be cleared from the streets but were paid handsomely yesterday to articulate their disgust for the television crews that descended on King's Cross.

"We don't scare people. We just sit here looking cold and people chuck us a few coins," Mr Lee said. "We rarely get insulted and the worst we face is being moved on by the police, but we all know each other so there is never any trouble."

Counting the morning's takings, Mr Lee took a forlorn draught from his can of lager and declared that Mr Blair had been good for business yesterday.

Most commuters who stopped to throw some money in Mr Lee's woolen hat evidently had more sympathy for

him than the Labour leader. Michael Hardman, an accounts manager from Bushey, Hertfordshire, said: "These people don't intimidate you and sitting out in this cold is hard work to me. Tony Blair's remarks came across as cheap and heartless."

Mr Blair said in an interview with *The Big Issue*, a magazine distributed by the homeless, that he often dropped his children off to take a Tube at King's Cross, and that "it's a frightening place for people". But Prem Vohra, duty customer operations manager at the station, said: "This is one of the friendliest and safest places in London. He must get easily scared."

Adrian Templeton, 41, who sells *The Big Issue* at King's Cross, adopted a new sales technique yesterday, shouting to a commuter: "Excuse me, madam, I am begging but I'm still doing a more honest job than Tony Blair."

As she bought her copy, containing Mr Blair's comments, Nicola Morris, 26, said: "He is talking rubbish

and should be ashamed of himself. He has lost my vote."

Senior police were concerned that Mr Blair's remarks might have damaged their efforts to erase the King's Cross reputation for drug addicts, prostitutes and beggars. Since Operation Wellwyn, a New York-style zero-tolerance endeavour, began in 1992, crime in the area has dropped by more than 50 per cent.

Superintendent Geoff Holmes, of British Transport Police, said: "We have worked with local charities and the council to help alcoholics and addicts to get treatment and find places for vagrants to stay, and we are proud of what we have achieved."

"We used to have occasional purges and the prostitutes just moved to Paddington, the beggars went three miles north to Camden and the addicts to Islington. Now the operation is co-ordinated so we get them off the street for a while at least."

Pausing to give a brief television interview for E10, Louise Gilbert, 17, and Laura Foley, 16, evaded the police and scurried down to the Underground ticket machines, where they know travellers are likely to have a handful of change. Wrapped in a pink duvet to ward off the cold, Miss Foley said that in the week before Christmas she had earned £50 a day "because people felt a bit guilty". But usually the teenagers aimed for £20 to be spent on cigarettes, a hot drink and food, and then moved to another Tube station before police could catch them.

They said that they had been thrown out of their homes and had been arrested for vagrancy, but they intend to ignore Mr Blair and carry on begging. So does Mr Lee: "At my age, and with 29 years spent in prison for various offences, what else am I going to do?"

Leading article, page 17



"We don't scare people, we just sit here looking cold," said John Lee, right, with a friend in King's Cross yesterday

Tea and sympathy substituted for hard cash, but not all are givers

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY
CAROL MIDDLEY
AND ROBIN YOUNG

THE disclosure by Tony Blair that he refuses to give money to beggars sparked a heated debate yesterday over how to react when accosted by the homeless. Anyone courageous enough to tackle John Prescott, Mr Blair's deputy, in King's Cross may feel warmer, but no wealthier after the meeting.

The pugnacious Mr Prescott, challenged on his own response, hesitated before divulging: "What I do sometimes is I offer them a cup of tea when I'm up at King's Cross. But they don't always want it. We may never know whether Mr Prescott gives them the tea regardless."

Most generous of all the senior politicians, according to his own reckoning, is John Major, although few of the homeless will hear the jingle of his money. "Yes, I give a great deal of money to beggars," said the Prime Minister



Joan Bakewell's view was changed by experience and she now gives money, as does Auberon Waugh

in preparation to a well-rehearsed response. "Millions of pounds of your money. The Government has given a lot of money to beggars to make sure that those inadequately sheltered

are in preparation to a well-rehearsed response. "Millions of pounds of your money. The Government has given a lot of money to beggars to make sure that those inadequately sheltered

more than £1 — perhaps a little more if they have dogs, nothing if there are children — but I personally dislike 50p pieces so they are what I dispense most readily."

Brian Sewell, the art critic, was more generous. "I carry in my pocket what I call the beggar's note, which is a five," he said. "I come across people begging frequently, and it disturbs me."

Malcolm Bradbury, the au-

thor, said: "We give money, but to our own charities. It is dedicated giving. Like everyone else I am desperately concerned by the spectacle of homelessness. It is a complex problem, part of which is the Mental Health Act. I think Tony Blair's words were meant compassionately."

Joan Bakewell, the television presenter, said: "I didn't give to beggars because I didn't think it solved their problems. But then I did a programme for *Heart of the Matter* in which I had to sit on pavements and in doorways with the homeless and it completely changed my attitude."

"Beggars do want money, but what they really wanted was contact with people. Even if you just say 'How are you?' it is better than nothing."

Clare Rayner, the agony aunt, said: "I do give money to beggars because it seems to me that if someone is that far down that he is prepared to beg then that is the least I can do for him."

MAJOR v BLAIR

Tory officials yesterday accused Tony Blair of hypocrisy after the Prime Minister claimed to have backed so-called zero tolerance policies two years ago and been criticised for it. Mr Major said: "It will be interesting to see what they have to say today since Mr Blair has now said, two years after me, precisely the same thing."

Mr Major, in May 1994 in an interview with the *Bristol Evening Post* during the Eastleigh by-election campaign, said: "It is not acceptable to be out on the street. There is no justification for it. The problem about begging is as old as the hills. It is very offensive to many people."

Mr Blair, then Shadow Home Secretary, said in response: "The real criticism of what the Prime Minister has done [in attacking beggars] is not only its vindictiveness against some who will be genuinely destitute, it is the notion that this is what we should be concentrating on. It is the pettiness and small-mindedness of it which will affront people and bewilder them when there are such massive problems to tackle, and when the Prime Minister appears to be oblivious to them."

However, Mr Blair also said that aggressive beggars who "push people against the wall and demand money effectively with menaces" should be dealt with firmly.

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THE HYUNDAI LANTRA. THE CURVY CAR.

Doctors 'wrong about measles'

By DOMINIC KENNEDY, SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

MEASLES is being wrongly diagnosed by general practitioners in 97 per cent of cases. The discovery, based on a study of 12,000 patients, means that the potentially fatal disease has been almost eradicated in Britain.

The finding also leaves doctors wondering which other, possibly more serious, rashes have been afflicting the population without being recognised. The widespread misdiagnosis raises a question mark over the costly new immunisation campaign to give a booster jab to all pre-school children, which was introduced last October.

Until two years ago, the only way a doctor could be certain that a patient had measles was to perform a blood test. Since most sufferers were children, GPs were reluctant to stick a needle in their arms to confirm an illness with relatively minor consequences in early years.

Measles is more serious for teenagers and adults, especially those with weak immune

systems. It kills a million people a year in the developing world, especially malnourished children.

A simple saliva test has been developed and since 1994 has been sent to all doctors who diagnosed measles, which is a notifiable disease. Analysis has shown that fewer than 3 per cent of the patients had measles.

Roger Buttery, who is carrying out a new study to discover what the rashes really are, said: "Any doctor or nurse would reckon to spot measles at 100 yards. We were to put it crudely, gobsmacked to think that a disease so obvious as measles in 97 per cent of cases actually isn't measles."

The other likely candidates could be more serious, said Dr Buttery, consultant in communicable diseases for the Cambridge and Huntingdon Health Commission. Parvovirus can cause problems in early pregnancy, German measles is linked to birth defects, and Roseola may give a child a convulsion.

Newsprint recycling beats target

By NICK NUTTALL, ENVIRONMENT CORRESPONDENT

BRITISH newspapers are leading the world in the reuse of newsprint. More than 40 per cent of titles are produced from recycled paper, a meeting of national and regional publishers and newsprint makers was told yesterday.

While John Gummer, the Environment Secretary, hailed the industry's green achievements, *Friends of the Earth* accused it of failing to strive for recycling targets of up to 80 per cent and of not using enough wood from sustainably managed forests.

Sir Frank Rogers, chairman of the Newspaper Publishers' Association, said it was impractical to have more waste paper in newspapers at the moment. "The plain fact is that the capacity of the recycling plant in the UK currently would not allow this to be met."

Mr Gummer pointed out that the 40 per cent target had been achieved four years earlier than the 2000 deadline.

Mackay to face MPs' Freemason inquiry

The Lord Chancellor is to be questioned by MPs about Freemasonry in the judiciary amid mounting pressure for judges and police officers to declare their Masonic membership. Lord Mackay of Clashfern, will appear before the Commons Home Affairs Committee as part of its inquiry into Freemasonry. Judges are facing calls to resign as Freemasons or, at least, publicly state their membership when they take up a judicial appointment. The *Masonic Year Book* includes more than 30 judges.

Oasis caution

Liam Gallagher, of the pop group Oasis, escaped with a police caution yesterday for possession of cocaine. Gallagher, 24, had been arrested on November 9 in the West End of London and given police bail. The decision was condemned by MPs.

Snap solution

Bus lane cheats will be caught on camera for the first time in a scheme to be launched in March. The project is to be piloted in north London with cameras being mounted on buses and at the roadside. The Home Office is expected to give approval next month.

Player cleared

Steve McCurrie, 23, a Great Britain rugby league international, was acquitted at Warrington Crown Court yesterday of inflicting grievous bodily harm on a three-month-old girl. It was alleged he shook the child.

Drugs sentence

Frederick Whelan, 65, who smuggled cannabis worth £140 into Gartree Prison, Leicestershire, to his stepson who is serving a life sentence for the murder of paperback publisher Carl Bridgewater, was jailed for a year.

Asylum fall

The number of asylum-seekers has fallen dramatically since the Government restricted social security benefits available to them. There were 25,000 applications last year up to November, compared with 40,435 the year before.

Drink-drive fine

Sergeant Pamela De Neve, 32, a police training instructor, faces dismissal after being fined £1,800 by Ipswich Magistrates and disqualified for two years after driving into a parked car while almost three times the legal alcohol limit.

Curzon freed

Peter Curzon, 47, heir to Viscount Scarsdale, was released from custody in Charing Cross police station in London yesterday after a divorce settlement of several hundred thousand pounds was paid to his former wife.

Gas blast victims

Maria Breen and her sons Colin, 7, and Iwan, 5, are in hospital after they were trapped in rubble when a gas explosion wrecked their home. Neighbours and firefighters from New Tredegar, Gwent, South Wales, rescued them.

Transsexual loses

A 6ft blonde transsexual who was refused a job as a woman police officer after undergoing a sex-change operation lost a claim yesterday at a Birmingham tribunal for sex discrimination against West Midlands Police.

Liam makes the top ten ... for names

By IAN MURRAY

LIAM has for the first time entered the list of top ten names chosen for sons. Not put off by the bad boy image of the Oasis rock star Liam Gallagher, enough parents preferred it to make it No 10 in the table of first names published today by the Office for National Statistics.

Jack and Sophie were the most popular first names for boys and girls born in England and Wales last year, with Jack winning the title for the second year running. The list also shows that such Victorian favourites as Joshua are outstripping the Darrens and Jasons which were popular not so long ago. Celtic names like Ryan and Shannon are becoming more common than John or Henry.

Royal names are less popular, with Charles way down at 45 and Diana not even making it into the top 50 for girls. In

BOYS

1 Jack, 2 Daniel, 3 Thomas, 4 James, 5 Joshua, 6 Matthew, 7 Ryan, 8 Samuel, 9 Joseph, 10 Liam, 11 Luke, 12 Jordan, 13 Connor, 14 Alexander, 15 Benjamin, 16 Adam, 17 Jake, 18 Harry, 19 William, 20 Michael, 21 George, 22 Callum, 23 Oliver, 24 Lewis, 25 Christopher, 26 Niall, 27 Robert, 28 Andrew, 29 Jamie, 30 Nathan, 31 David, 32 Bradley, 33 Aaron, 34 Ben, 35 Jacob, 36 Mohammed, 37 Kyle, 38 Charlie, 39 Jonathan, 40 Ashley, 41 John, 42 Cameron, 43 Alex, 44 Isaac, 45 Charles, 46 Edward, 47 Scott, 48 Sean, 49 Sam, 50 Dominic

GIRLS

1 Sophie, 2 Jessica, 3 Chloe, 4 Emily, 5 Lauren, 6 Rebecca, 7 Charlotte, 8 Hannah, 9 Amy, 10 Megan, 11 Shannon, 12 Katie, 13 Emma, 14 Sallwy, 15 Lucy, 16 Laura, 17 Georgia, 18 Sarah, 19 Jade, 20 Abigail, 21 Danielle, 22 Eleanor, 23 Olivia, 24 Alice, 25 Elizabeth, 26 Rachel, 27 Paige, 28 Molly, 29 Holly, 30 Zoe, 31 Samantha, 32 Ellie, 33 Chloee, 34 Nicole, 35 Natasha, 36 Leah, 37 Victoria, 38 Alexandra, 39 Georgina, 40 Grace, 41 Amber, 42 Jodie, 43 Natalie, 44 Abbie, 45 Anna, 46 Katherine, 47 Louise, 48 Stephanie, 49 Melissa, 50 Gemma

boys' names, Harry and William take eighteenth and fifteenth places, Andrew is twenty-eighth and Edward forty-sixth. Elizabeth is twenty-fifth among the girls.

Today's more informal society also means that familiar forms of names are becoming

more popular. Jack is preferred to John (41) or James (4), Charlie (38) scores better than Charles (45) and Katie (12) is above Katherine (46).

The fastest-rising name in this year's list is Leah, up 20 places to 36, possibly a reflection of the way in which the

Ecstasy death of the teenager Leah Betts at the end of 1995 touched hearts across the nation. The influence of television advertising is evident from the way Molly, the name of a toddler starring in a Safeway supermarket commercial, soared 19 places in this year's chart to 36.

The list shows that parents are far more conservative in choosing names for boys than they are for girls. James is the only one to have appeared in the top ten since the first-name records began in 1946.

This year's top seven boys' names — Jack, Daniel, Thomas, James, Joshua, Matthew and Ryan — are unchanged from 1995, with Samuel moving up and Joseph and Liam replacing Luke and Jordan in the top ten.

The girls' top ten sees Sophie, Chloe (up six to No 3), Emily (up four to No 4), and Megan (up four to No 10), gaining in popularity.



Humphrey Lyttelton, singer Cleo Laine and her husband John Dankworth at the crematorium yesterday. Scott "was modest to a fault, but his club put London on the jazz map of the world", Lyttelton said

Blues for Ronnie Scott transformed into swinging celebration

By ALAN HAMILTON

THE turnout at the funeral of Ronnie Scott yesterday would have done justice to a Saturday night at the Soho club which he founded and which put London on the jazz map of the world.

Musicians, admirers, friends, lovers and daughters of the permanent bachelor packed Golders Green crematorium, north

London, to bid farewell to the best known name in British jazz. So many mourners attended that more than 100 were left outside. Tributes came from beyond mainstream jazz: they included flowers from the rock musicians Van Morrison and Keith Emerson.

Scott was Jewish, but his true religion lay elsewhere, in the sinful and smoky world of after-dark clubland. His funeral service was

dignified but relaxed, with no prayer books or orders of service, only a tape of his sweet tenor sax playing softly in the background as his coffin was carried in. Rabbi Guy Hall told the congregation that Scott's club was as dark as a medieval cathedral, its walls covered with the icons of jazz saints — but that the water it served was far from holy. The Talmud, Rabbi Hall said, spoke of those who made

music in the present world also doing so in the next. He speculated that on Scott's arrival in Heaven, angels hung up their hales to jam with Gabriel and his tenor horn in a dark backroom. "Jazz is prayer: its songs speak of suffering or falling in and out of love."

Benny Green, the jazz writer, broadcaster and friend of Scott for 45 years, shared with the congregation the reminiscence that 69-year-

old Scott had, in his early years, expressed the wish to be cremated, provided that his ashes were scattered over his agent, Harold Davidson. The veteran band leader Humphrey Lyttelton said after the service: "I rarely played at his club, as the first set was always after my bedtime. But he was, in his own mind, first and foremost a tenor sax player. He was modest to a fault, but his club put London on the jazz

map of the world, a fantastic achievement for a modest man." A frail Spike Milligan recalled that Scott had suffered, like himself, from manic depression. "He rang me the week before he died, and I asked him what pills he was on. He said Tuinal and whisky. I said that was no good, and he'd better come and stay with me. But then he was dead."

At the end of the service the

congregation, led by Scott's former partner Mary Scott and their daughter Rebecca, trooped out to a tape of Stan Getz and Jimmy Rowles playing, appropriately, *What Am I Here For?* in the biting wind of Golders Green, there was only one place for the mourners to go for a decent wake. They piled into limousines, cars and taxis and headed straight for Ronnie Scott's club.

Firm's former boss 'ended up making the tea'

By PAUL WILKINSON

A BUSINESSWOMAN, who sold her security company to a rival ended up, being demoted to saleswoman and being told to make the tea for a job applicant, an industrial tribunal was told yesterday. Doris Jones, who is claiming sexual discrimination, said she also earned less than men in more junior posts.

Mrs Jones, a Conservative councillor from Darlington, Co Durham, set up Sale and Sure in 1985 and sold it to Ambassador Security Group in 1990, remaining as branch manager, but clashed almost immediately with Les Robinson, the regional sales manager. She said he told her to take her name off a job advertisement because men would not want to apply to a woman. He had also suggested she take redundancy because she was a woman over 50.

At one point she had complained that her branch did not have an engineering manager and suggested interviewing a man called Jim Sadler.



Jones was demoted after she sold out.

Les Robinson sat in on the interview and told me to get some coffee. In my absence Jim Sadler was offered a salary of £17,025 per year. This was despite the fact that, as his superior, I would have been earning considerably less. I only became aware because the offer letter was sent to me inadvertently.

Mrs Jones told the tribunal at Newcastle upon Tyne that she was paid £15,500 as branch manager, but men in the same position in Hull and Leeds were paid £16,500 and the Manchester branch manager received £21,500. In April 1995, the Darlington and Hull offices had merged and she was offered demotion to the post of sales manager, with a 3 per cent salary increase, or redundancy.

"Mr Robinson made it clear he wanted me to take redundancy. He told me, 'As you are a woman past the age of 50, and women being what they are, I would have thought you would have wanted to stay at home and accept the redundancy package.'"

It had then been agreed she should have the job originally offered to her. But later that year, Mr Robinson had told her that the Darlington branch was being transferred to Gateshead and administration work would be done at Hull. Her position as sales manager was changed to sales executive after all.

She said: "I was shell-shocked to be demoted twice in 12 months while my male colleagues had been cushioned. I could not escape the conclusion that I was being pushed out because I was a woman."

The hearing continues.

Millionaire pays for starring role

By DALYA ALBERGE, ARTS CORRESPONDENT

A JAPANESE millionaire who takes private music lessons is to star as a singer and conductor in a concert he has organised and funded at one of London's foremost venues: the Royal Albert Hall.

Toshiki Fukami, who has no intention of giving up his day job as a management consultant, has paid £50,000 to take centre stage at St John's, Smith Square. He will be singing arias from Handel's *Xerxes* and Verdi's *Macbeth* and conducting Elgar's *Land of Hope and Glory*. He will conduct the English Chamber Orchestra.

Mr Fukami, 45, whose business interests include travel agencies, publishing companies and hostels in Japan, Britain and Australia, sees concerts as "a way to challenge yourself but also to have humility". He said: "I'm the president of 15 companies, so people obey me when I tell them what to do. But in the arts there will always be superiors to me, so I listen to them. It makes me more open-minded to my employees and that helps to run my business."

He has had private tuition in singing and conducting in

Japan and America and a friend introduced him to the chamber orchestra. He also composes classical, pop and jazz music. His artistic activities are not just for art's sake: through a foundation which he set up last year, he raises money for charities.

He paid £300,000 to appear at New York's Carnegie Hall last November. Tonight's concert will help children with leukaemia.

Shuntaro Sato, the orchestra's associate conductor, said: "He's a gentleman with a lot of enthusiasms and interests. That amazed me." Asked about a professional orchestra working with an amateur, he added: "It's not usually a good idea. But it's a good change for the ECO or a professional orchestra. It's good to bring different kinds of enthusiasms. Amateurs don't have to worry about money and can take some kind of risk. Fukami has got a real talent."

Mr Fukami said: "The arts are always recreating — that's what fascinates me. Whenever I perform I have to come up with new things to make audiences happy. I strive never to repeat a performance."

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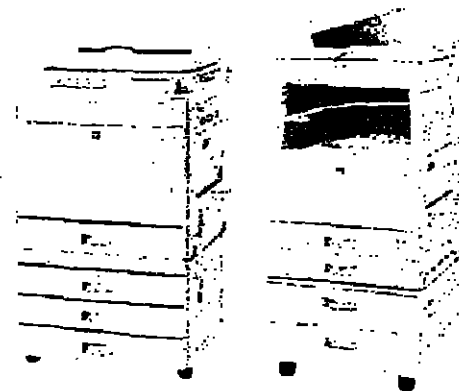
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Forgotten footage yields more Bogie and Bacall magic

By DAIZA ALBERGE, ARTS CORRESPONDENT

EIGHTEEN minutes of previously unseen film starring Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall, which the director Howard Hawks cut from his 1946 classic *The Big Sleep*, have been discovered in archives.

Adrian Wootton, head of the National Film Theatre, which will screen the early print for the first time at the weekend, called it an "incredible discovery of one of the most famous films ever made".

Hawks, who gave Bacall her big break in 1945 with *To Have and Have Not*, is known to have removed the 18 minutes to allow for extra scenes to heighten the Bogart-Bacall romance. No one had realised that the original version of *The Big Sleep*, made a year before the final reworking was released, had survived.

It had been languishing in the Warner Bros archives, at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), and was discovered by chance when



Hawks: he preferred to use the earlier scenes

the National Film Theatre asked for material relating to its Hawks retrospective. The 18-minute print was in fragile condition and needed extensive restoration.

The tense and moody thriller, adapted from a 1939 Raymond Chandler story, gave Bogart and Bacall two of

their best-known roles: Philip Marlowe and Vivian Rutledge. Mr Wootton said that the most notable "new" material featured Bogart and three police detectives discussing the plot so far. "It's a confusing plot," Hawks tries to get round it by shooting that scene. But he decided that, although it made the plot more coherent, he wanted to make the Bogart-Bacall rapport sexier.

Another previously unknown scene showed the couple meeting in a "boring-looking office, with Bacall in an ordinary daytime dress and Bogart in an ordinary suit", Mr Wootton said. Hawks added glamour for the 1946 version by reshooting the scene in a nightclub, with Bacall wearing a slinky dress. The dialogue was made sexier, "with double-entendres thrown in".

The film was the most radical of Hawks's reworkings and gives new insight into his approach. Mr



The 1946 classic *The Big Sleep*: "the audience wanted to see Bogart and Bacall puckering up to each other"

Wootton said: "The original film makes you understand who killed who a little better than the 1946 version. You get baffled two thirds of the way through about who's blackmailing who, and for what. With this, you get a recap that makes you hold on to who's doing what to who. But you

lose the romantic tension. In the end, the audience wanted to see Bogart and Bacall puckering up to each other." Chandler once said that even he did not know "who done it". Apart from a preview to which Hawks decided to treat American troops in 1945, the rediscovered print has not

been shown to the public. The military audience is said not to have enjoyed it particularly; the re-edited film went on to become a huge success. Warner's archives includes prints of most of its major titles, as well as rushes and alternative versions of films which were changed before

being released. The 1945 version of *The Big Sleep*, whose restoration was funded by UCLA and the British Film Institute, will be screened on Saturday and Sunday, while the 1946 movie will be shown next month.

Hot tickets, page 33

Television record for Del Boy and Rodney

By ALEXANDRA FREAN, MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

A CHRISTMAS edition of the sitcom *Only Fools and Horses* attracted the biggest British television audience, according to official figures published yesterday.

The last episode of the three-part farewell edition of the show, screened on December 29, was watched by 24.35 million viewers. Episodes one and two, which were broadcast on Christmas Day and December 27, attracted audiences of 21.31 million and 21.35 million respectively.

Fans of the show, starring David Jason and Nicholas Lyndhurst, will be hoping the figures will encourage the BBC to make more episodes. The corporation had said that the Christmas special would be the last.

The average viewer spent 5 hours 11 minutes watching television on Christmas Day and 32 hours 55 minutes during Christmas week. The average viewing is 25 hours 9 minutes a week.

The baby who made history 36 years ago

By JOHN YOUNG

ALMOST 36 years ago Paul Carvin made history as the youngest "blue baby" to survive open heart surgery for a defect known as Fallot's tetralogy. Although he now has multiple sclerosis, he has led a normal, active life and is still keen to busy himself during periods of remission.

Mr Carvin was nine months old when he had the operation at the Evelina children's hospital, the paediatric department of Guy's Hospital, then in its original building in Southwark Bridge Road, London. A generation later, heart operations are regularly performed on much younger children, and even on foetuses, but at the time it was a big breakthrough.

A subsequent report in *The Lancet* recorded that, at 18 months, he was thriving, weighed 20lb, could run without breathlessness and that cyanosis, the lack of oxygen in the blood which causes the blue discoloration, had disappeared.

Mr Carvin had what he describes as a fairly normal childhood. There were periodic visits to the Evelina for check-ups, but on each occasion he was given a clean bill of health.

"But my parents were over-protective," he said. "My father, who worked for the BBC, had been a prisoner of war in Japan, and that may have had something to do with it. But it was probably understandable at the time."

"The school didn't want to take responsibility in case

anything happened to me, so I was not allowed to play games. At football matches I was allowed to be a linesman, but that was it. It's still one of my great regrets."

Proof that his heart was fully recovered came when he left school and, after a brief and unsatisfying spell in a solicitor's office, took a job in a pub just before his eighteenth birthday. Working in the cellar and behind the bar involved long hours and strenuous activity, but he thrived on it. "I never had a day's sickness."

His wife, Elizabeth, persuaded him to look for less hazardous employment and he became head porter at a London hospice, after which they worked as residential caretakers for six years at John Bunyan's church in Bedford. Since developing MS he has been unable to work regularly, but he has had periodic sedentary jobs, including monitoring closed-circuit television cameras.

Mr Carvin's problems have not been eased by his elder daughter's profound deafness. However, he remains philosophical and even cheerful, frustrated only by boredom at being no longer as active as he was.

"I have my bad days," he said. "I seem to catch every bug that's going and they really knock me out. But I am eternally grateful to Michael Joseph, the cardiologist, and Donald Ross, the surgeon, who gave me life and allowed me to live it to the full."

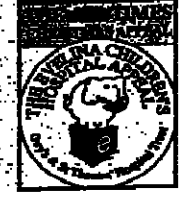


Paul Carvin, a former "blue baby", with his wife, Elizabeth, and daughters Sophie, 10, left, and Amy, 9

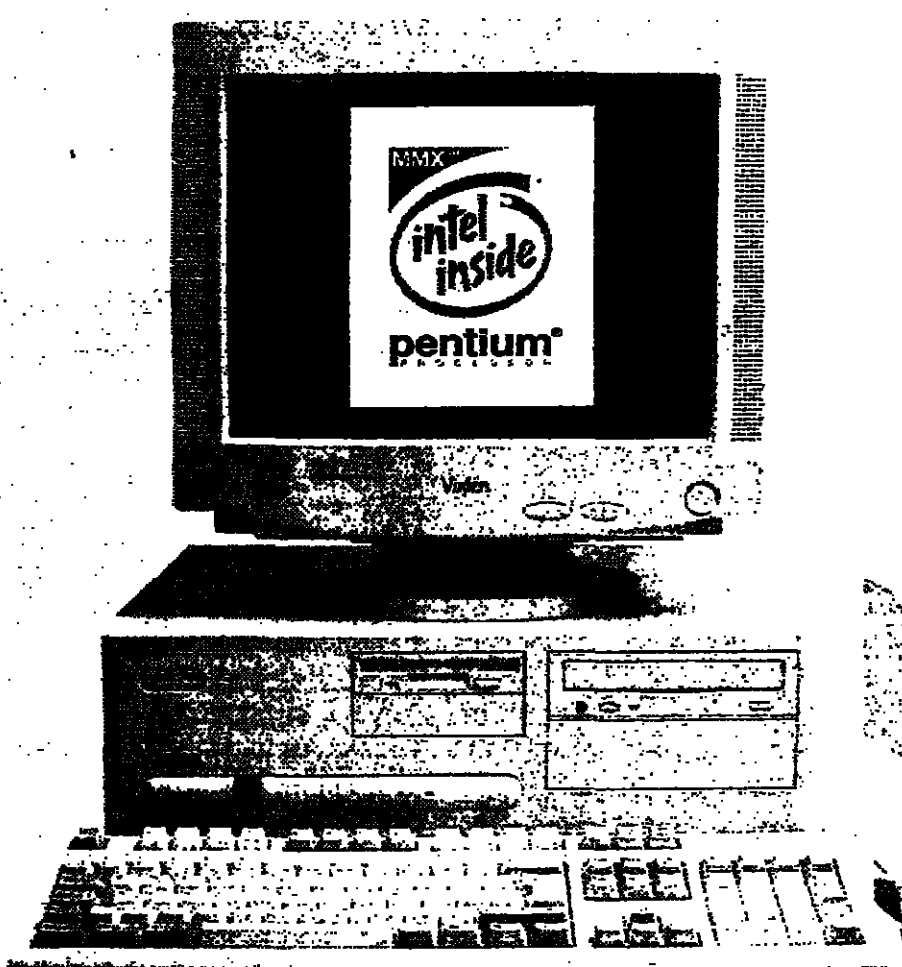
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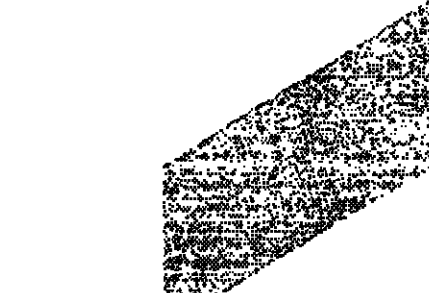
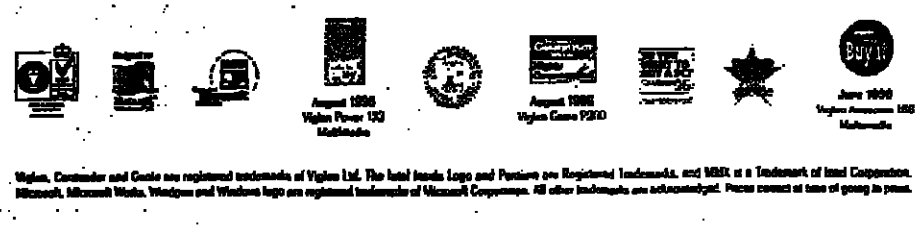


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Unrepentant soldier re-enacts shooting amid dispute over further withdrawals

New demand by Israel holds up deal on Hebron

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

AS THE United States stepped up its efforts yesterday to secure the so far elusive deal on the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Hebron, there was a bizarre reminder of the dangers threatening the West Bank.

Under the eerie glow of floodlights, Noam Friedman, the 22-year-old Israeli soldier who tried to kill "as many Arabs as possible" in the city last week, returned to the marketplace to re-enact his actions for police investigators. His attempted massacre left six Palestinians wounded, and increased the urgency of the mission of Dennis Ross, the US negotiator.

Last night he held yet another round of talks with Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian Authority President, after ear-

lier meeting Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister. Israel radio said Palestinians were increasingly pessimistic about the chances of an agreement. It quoted one senior Palestinian official as saying that Mr Ross was expected to return to the US before the end of the week.

A CAR driven by a 15-year-old Palestinian boy crashed into a crowded bakery in Jerusalem's main Jewish vegetable market yesterday, killing one person, wounding six and spreading panic about a possible new terrorist attack. Last night police were still trying to establish whether or not the crash was an accident.

The Palestinians have dismissed a new demand by Mr Netanyahu to delay three more Israeli troop withdrawals from the West Bank — planned for after the Hebron pullout — from September 1997 to spring 1999. "The last redeployment is a very, very contentious issue. Our interpretations are very far apart," David Bar-Ilan, the Prime Minister's spokesman said.

Hassan Asfour, the Palestinian negotiator, attacked the proposal, the main sticking point holding up a deal on Hebron. "This is irresponsible," he said. "The agreement specifically states that the last stage of further redeployments from the West Bank be completed by September 7, 1997." Mr Ross was struggling to broker a deal.



Private Noam Friedman, who "tried to kill as many Arabs as possible" when he opened fire in Hebron last week, with investigators

In the pre-dawn re-enactment, an unrepentant Private Friedman declared to investigators: "I wanted to kill as many Arabs as possible." The soldier was surrounded by army guards and wore a bullet-proof vest in case Palestinian gunmen tried to avenge the shooting.

A religious Jew with a history of psychiatric problems, he told investigators that he had deliberately opened fire at Arab shoppers in the hope of scumming the long-

delayed Israeli withdrawal from 80 per cent of Hebron, a city holy to both Jews and Arabs. "I wanted to prove that Hebron is ours, always and forever," he said.

He spoke haltingly into a microphone while handcuffed to a soldier. He also gripped the M16 rifle that he had used in the attack, from which the ammunition clip had been removed. Under Israeli law suspects who confess to major crimes are obliged to re-enact them.

The would-be mass murderer said he had also wanted to avenge Baruch Goldstein, the New York-born settler who was killed after he had massacred 29 Palestinian worshippers in a Hebron mosque in 1994.

Naked truth enrages Turkish Islamists

FROM ANDREW FINKEL IN ISTANBUL

ATURKISH tabloid sensation over a radical Muslim cleric caught with his trousers down has fuelled a growing rift between the country's media and pro-Islamic government.

Muslim Gunduz, an extreme Islamic sect member, faces five to ten years in prison on charges tantamount to sedition after being apprehended in a raid by Istanbul's anti-terrorist squad.

The manner of his arrest has caused controversy. Police who barged down the door took with them cameramen from some of Turkey's many private television stations. The religious leader was shown on the evening news without clothes and with one of his

female followers, who is in her early twenties.

"It's a very juicy story and a very important one too," said Haluk Sahin, news co-ordinator of Kanal D Television, which helped to break the story. The woman, Fadime Sahin (no relation) has accused Muslim Gunduz of abusing her trust, and the leader of another Islamic religious order of rape.

Such attention is not to the liking of the Welfare Party, the senior partner in the ruling coalition, which has declared war on Turkey's press barons and is trying to curb live broadcasts of events such as shoot-outs between police and suspects.

Mastroianni widow 'liked' two of actor's mistresses

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

THE widow of the late Marcello Mastroianni, the actor who died last month, revealed warm feelings towards her husband's many famous mistresses yesterday, saying that she had often comforted Marcello "like a sister" when the relationships ended in tears.

Flora Mastroianni said she had liked at least two of her husband's various mistresses, the actresses Faye Dunaway and Catherine Deneuve. Both relationships had been founded on real passion, she said, yet the actor had always maintained the marital home and had refused to divorce her. "In the end, he always

came back to me," Signora Mastroianni told the magazine *Gente*.

She said she had found Deneuve very *sympatica* and approachable, while Dunaway had been "typically American and sophisticated... on the set of *L'Amante* she was always twirling around with a silk scarf on her head".

She said she had no strong views on Mastroianni's last companion, Anna Maria Tatò, "because he didn't talk to me about her, unlike the others".



Deneuve "sympatica" and approachable

Greenpeace sues author over book that 'unveils mystery'

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

A BOOK claiming to disclose the inner workings of Greenpeace has been met with an immediate libel action from the international environmental organisation.

The *Hidden face of Greenpeace* — *Infiltration into the Heart of the International Ecology Movement*, published in France this week, describes itself as the latest attempt to penetrate an organisation that has gained huge media publicity for its operations.

The book, written under the pseudonym Olivier Vermont, purports to be the work of an independent French journalist who posed as a militant envi-

ronmentalist to gain access to Greenpeace-France and the headquarters of Greenpeace International in Amsterdam.

Working under cover over ten months, Vermont says he sought to "unveil the mystery" surrounding the group, which employs a large staff and spends millions on environmental operations. Based on his conversations with Greenpeace members, the author alleges among other things, without providing proof, that Greenpeace has "secret dealings with certain states such as China and Russia".

In 1995 Greenpeace reported a worldwide income of \$153 million (£90 million), but

Vermont claims that it maintains a "war chest" of \$128 million, as well as several secret bank accounts. He also accuses Greenpeace of acquiring property and claims that only 6 per cent of the money donated to the group is spent on protecting the environment.

Even before the book appeared in French bookshops on Monday, Greenpeace began a legal counter-attack. Greenpeace International and Greenpeace-France have jointly accused the author and his publisher, Albin Michel, of libellously publishing "defamatory statements, untruths, distortions of the facts and absurd allegations".

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Britons recruited to Mobutu's white mercenary force

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

HUNDREDS of European mercenaries, including several Britons and others recruited by former French government security officers, are massing in eastern Zaire to mount a counter-offensive against Rwandan-backed rebels, according to French news reports.

The "White Legion", numbering between 200 and 300 men and intended to back up the beleaguered Zairean Army, was recruited in part by Colonel Alain Le Carro, former head of the presidential guard under the late François Mitterrand, *Le Monde* reported. The French Defence Ministry described the mercenary force as a "private initiative" without government backing.

The reports came a day after Paris denied rebel claims that 1,000 French troops had arrived in Kisangani to bolster the Zairean forces and stem the rebel advance. The Rwandan-

backed rebels, led by Laurent Kabila, have beaten back the demoralised regular Zairean Army to take strategic towns in eastern Zaire.

President Mobutu of Zaire, who has used international mercenaries to support his regime in the past, returned to Zaire last month after a four-month convalescence in Europe in the wake of cancer surgery.

Another former French "gendarme", Robert Montoya,



who has been linked with the notorious anti-terrorist unit at the Elysée Palace under President Mitterrand, is said to be in command of "logistical aspects of the operation in liaison with a South African company, Executive Outcomes". The company, however, denies any involvement in the Zairean conflict.

Le Monde said that more mercenaries are expected to leave Europe in the next two weeks "to join the South Africans, Angolans, Mozambicans, Belgians and Britons already in place". The "White Legion" is said to include at least ten French mercenaries, former members of the French Foreign Legion and comrades-in-arms of Bob Denard, the veteran French mercenary who most recently led an abortive coup in the Comoros in October 1995.

French military officials confirmed that they were aware of the force, but said they doubted its effectiveness. One French general, quoted by *Le Monde*, described the mercenaries "as pot-bellied ex-soldiers cashed in the face of an army equipped, trained and led on American lines".

The French authorities denied any involvement in or knowledge of the mercenaries' activities. "If such a force exists, it is in total contradiction with French policy and, as such, must be condemned in the strongest terms," Catherine Colonna, the President's spokeswoman, said.

Official French military assistance to Zaire has declined sharply since 1991 and there are no longer defence accords linking the two countries. France has backed President Mobutu politically, but cannot provide direct military aid because of the international arms embargo on Zaire.

'Dogs of war' scent wealth in Africa

By SAM KILEY, AFRICA CORRESPONDENT

ANY British mercenaries hired to prop up Zaire's crumbling regime will be ordered to retake its gold mines from advancing rebels.

Le Monde has claimed that the "dogs of war" have been hired by the Pretoria-based Executive Outcomes, a South African company which has a close relationship with British mining enterprises.

Although Executive Outcomes denies the latest reports, it has deployed former South African troops on missions for the governments of Angola and Sierra Leone. As a result, foreign companies obtained diamond mining concessions worth hundreds of thousands of pounds a year.

British companies have been in the forefront benefiting from the activities of foreign soldiers of fortune who, during African civil wars, have captured areas containing mineral wealth

from rebels. The companies have then gained the mining rights and operated under mercenary protection.

If Executive Outcomes were to become involved in Zaire, its main aim would be to retake gold mines lost to the rebels south and east of Kisangani. The task of any mercenaries would also be to protect the strategic city of Kisangani on the Congo River.

African guerrillas used to live in fear of white mercenaries because of their superior firepower and training. In the 1960s Zaire, then the Congo, was a playground for European soldiers of fortune.

But if paid to defend President Mobutu, they will come up against Tutsi-led rebels who have a well-founded reputation for tactical skill and battlefield bravery. Yesterday they gave a warning that any foreign mercenaries they capture will be shot.



Queen Margrethe, who is a compulsive smoker, lights up at an official function

Denmark defends smoking Queen

FROM CHRISTOPHER FOLLETT IN COPENHAGEN

DANES are furious at their arch-enemies Sweden after a Swedish television celebrity dared to criticise their chain-smoking Queen Margrethe for setting a bad example by lighting up in public.

Writing in the daily *Goeteborgs-Posten*, Hagge Geijert said: "The Danish Queen should show the public an example instead of performing like a living advertisement for cancer-causing tobacco. Her smoking habits are totally irresponsible."

The retired but still popular star criticised the Queen for smoking during a visit to a care centre for asthma victims. He compared her compulsive habit with the politically correct behaviour of King Gustav of Sweden, who only smokes in private.

His remarks outraged Danish tabloid newspapers which accused Sweden of hypocrisy and "typical Swedish double standards".

But the Royal Court in Copenhagen took a "laid back" attitude. The Lord Chamberlain said: "Most Danes think that it is entirely a private matter for the Queen whether or not she smokes."

Nevertheless, the Queen has been frequently criticised at home for her smoking. Queen Margrethe is a second cousin of Queen Elizabeth.

Bosnian hijacker held in Berlin

By ROGER BOYES

MASKED German commandos crawled through the back hatch of a grounded airliner in Berlin and overpowered a Bosnian hijacker, prodding him through the open front door on to the runway.

A police spokesman said the 39-year-old Bosnian had lived in the eastern German port of Rostock for the past six years and was due to be sent back to his homeland. However, the man wanted to stay in Germany and the aim of the hijack was to force the German authorities to give him residency and work permits.

The bloodless climax to the attempted hijack ended a two-hour siege at Tegel airport. The Bosnian appears to have been on the list of refugees to be repatriated by the authorities: the first of several hundred thousand refugees have already been sent home.

Shortly after the mid-morning Austrian Airlines flight took off from Berlin en route to Vienna, the hijacker produced a long knife and demanded that the plane return. The control tower was alerted and all air traffic halted over Berlin.

The hijacker appears to have been lured to the open front door on the basis that talks were about to begin. However, a commando unit that had already slipped into the aircraft through a back entrance pushed him out.

Stock market plan to salvage US pensions

FROM BRONWEN MADDOX IN WASHINGTON

THE Clinton Administration yesterday reacted warily to radical proposals to repair America's tottering pensions system by investing stock security funds in the stock market.

Although Wall Street houses reacted gleefully to the suggestion, advanced by a government advisory panel on Monday, that hundreds of billions of dollars of government funds should be poured into company shares, officials said they feared the plan would give the White House an intolerable conflict of interest.

The Government, which is the single most influential force on the US stock market, would also be the greatest beneficiary of any stock market rise, and concerns about the effect on the stock market would infiltrate every element of

policy-making. The proposal, one of three plans put forward by the panel, is based on the belief that in the long run, shares in companies will yield much higher returns than government bonds.

But Alan Greenspan, the Federal Reserve chairman, has made clear that he thinks it is a deceptive quick fix which will not work. If social security switches its money out of Treasury bonds into the stock market, other investors might well sell company shares and buy bonds, he says. The change might also make it more expensive for the Government to raise money through bonds.

Pensions are one of the most difficult political problems facing the Administration. It is clear that radical change is needed before the "baby boom" generation retires. Under the present system, where pensions are funded by payroll taxes, social security is expected to start paying out more than it receives in 2012, and to be bankrupt by 2029.

Tony Blair's Shadow Cabinet is keeping a close eye on the US Government's approach to the conundrum, which mirrors Britain's social security problems as the British population ages.

The British experience of the difficulty in fostering personal pensions is one reason why White House officials are nervous of the panel's second suggestion: to "privatise" half of the state pension system by requiring workers to invest in personal pension plans. The panel's third suggestion — to raise taxes — is regarded by all as politically unacceptable.



Greenspan: says quick fix will not work

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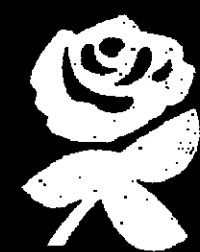
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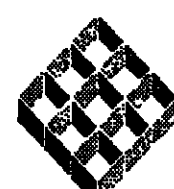
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Gingrich apologises for 'brash style' as Speaker

FROM BRONWEN MADDOX IN WASHINGTON

A CHASTENED Newt Gingrich yesterday used his narrow re-election as Speaker of the House of Representatives to apologise for his past ethical lapses and arrogance.

"Let me say to the entire House that to the degree I was too brash, too self-confident or too pushy, I apologise," Mr Gingrich told a packed House. "To whatever degree in any way that I have brought controversy or inappropriate attention to the House, I apologise."

It was an extraordinary admission for a belligerent man who has built his political fortunes on absence of self-doubt and a refusal to acknowledge error. Mr Gingrich, whose power was at its peak two years ago when he was first elected Speaker in the "Republican revolution" which seized control of Congress, has seen his authority severely eroded by weeks of ethical investigations which are not yet over.

Although Mr Gingrich managed to win last night's vote, he did not get a majority of the total 435 members of the House, but a Democratic challenge on these grounds was thrown out by the Clerk of the House.

Republicans cheered when Robin Carle, the Clerk, announced that Mr Gingrich had been "duly elected". Mr Gingrich's wife, Marianne, joined in the applause from her seat in the gallery.

Mr Gingrich, who said after a prayer breakfast yesterday that he was "seeking divine guidance", had been constantly on the phone in search of Republican votes. Four senior Republicans opposed Mr Gingrich's candidacy by sup-

porting a Democratic motion for an interim Speaker while the ethics questions about Mr Gingrich are investigated.

The climax to the saga, which has transfixed Washington for weeks, came in a House chamber, swarming with members' children, a tradition of the opening day of Congress. Running down the aisles, and tugging on their parents' arms out of boredom, they showed as much impatience as Mr Gingrich for the result.

The Speaker, exiled from his central seat in front of the American flag, strode the aisles clapping members on the back and trying to maintain the appearance of confidence.

Despite the vote, the battle has exacted a heavy penalty from Mr Gingrich. His power, at its height during the 1994 "Republican revolution", was eroded during the campaign, when voters made clear that they viewed his Contract with America as unpalatably harsh.

The ethics investigations have further eroded his influence, provoking a shift of power towards Trent Lott, the Republican Senate leader, and now viewed as the most powerful Republican in Washington. Mr Lott has struck up a rapport with President Clinton which could be of crucial importance in next month's battles over the budget.

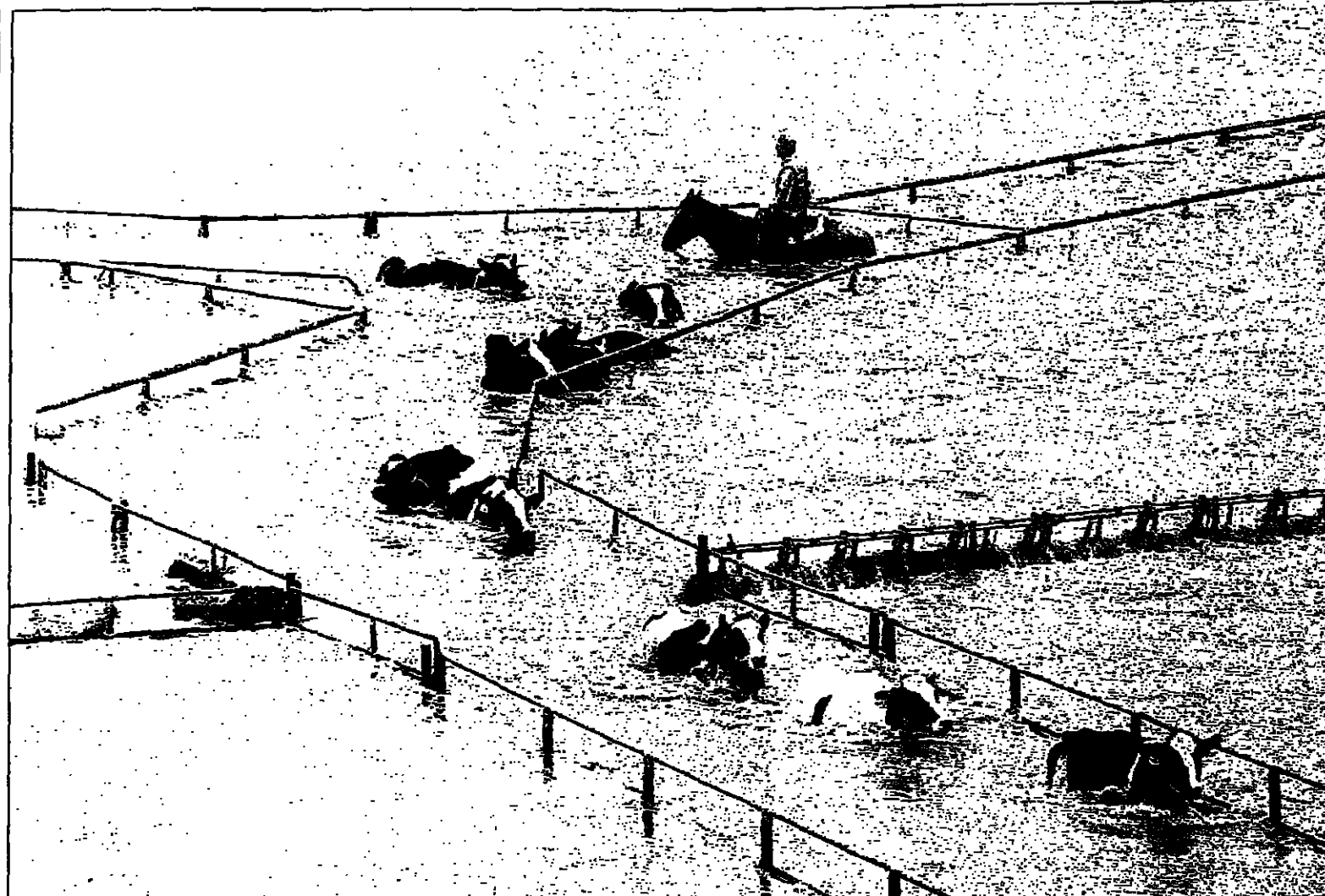
Despite his re-election, Mr Gingrich will spend two uncomfortable weeks before the ethics committee announces his punishment. The Speaker has admitted failing to consult a lawyer about the legality of using charitable donations, which were exempt from taxes, to finance a partisan televised lecture course, and to misleading the ethics committee about the source of the lecture course funds.

For the past two weeks Mr Gingrich has been obliged by his plea bargain with the ethics committee to keep silent, an irksome constraint on his ego.

Democrats are hoping that the Gingrich investigations will divert attention from their own problems. The sexual harassment suit brought against President Clinton by Paula Jones is expected to go to the Supreme Court on Monday.



Gingrich: was silenced by ethics committee



Gene Roberts, a farmer, tries to save some of the 600 cows that were stranded by floods near Modesto, California, after storms which caused 28 deaths (Giles Whitell writes).

Californians count cost after storm and flood devastation

The flooding, which came after a series of downpours that began on Boxing Day and lasted until the weekend, has been described by Pete Wilson, the Governor, as the most destructive in the state's history.

Rain and melted snow poured over the Sierra Nevada range into California's Great Central Valley, leaving thousands homeless, stripping

topsoil from farmland and forcing herds of cattle to swim through neck-deep waters to safety.

Forty-two of California's 58 counties were inundated as mountain torrents burst banks and breached dikes intended to protect the region known as America's salad basket. Early estimates put the cost of repairs at more than \$775 million

(\$461 million) in nine of the counties, where thousands of acres of winter wheat and tomato seedlings were swept away.

Many of the 125,000 people who were moved out of their homes in California and neighbouring states have now left Red Cross centres and begun assessing the damage to their properties. But relief agencies are

still working round the clock in Modesto, west of the mountains, and on the eastern fringe of normally arid Nevada, where the Governor, Bob Miller, said repairs could cost more than \$300 million.

Gales of 70 mph have toppled articulated lorries on to their sides along exposed sections of the main Los Angeles-Las Vegas highway, and closed dozens of main roads.

The disaster was caused when eight feet of snow fell on the Sierra Nevada the weekend before Christmas, then melted in a sudden warm spell over the new year holiday.

Parties condemn Pakistan army role

FROM ZAHID HUSSAIN IN ISLAMABAD

THE newly-formed Council for Defence and National Security, which has institutionalised the role of the military in Pakistan's political power structure, may declare a state of emergency to deal with the worsening political and economic situation.

The move has raised serious doubts that elections will be held on schedule next month as both of the main political parties have rejected the new arrangement, describing it as unconstitutional.

On Monday the interim Cabinet approved the formation of the ten-member council proposed and headed by President Leghari, who is also the supreme commander of the country's armed forces. The other members include the Prime Minister, Defence Minister, Interior Minister, Finance Minister, chief of the joint staff committee and the chiefs of army, navy and air

force. The council is due to hold its first meeting today. Irshad Ahmed Haqqani, the Interior Information Minister, said that its role will be advisory and its decisions not binding on the Cabinet.

The move has provoked a strong reaction from almost all the main political leaders. Benazir Bhutto, the deposed Prime Minister, accused the President of dragging the army into politics to save his job. She said that her party was seriously considering withdrawing from the elections.

Nawaz Sharif, another former Prime Minister, who is the strongest contender for power, said the council could not be set up without the approval of parliament. Imran Khan, who also aspires to be Prime Minister, called the move unconstitutional.

Leading article, page 17

US Supreme Court to rule over right to euthanasia

FROM BRONWEN MADDOX IN WASHINGTON

THE US Supreme Court will today begin to tackle the most explosive social issue to come before it for years: whether terminally-ill patients should have the right to hasten death with the help of a doctor.

The question of whether personal freedoms guaranteed by the US Constitution include the right to euthanasia is being heralded as the ethical issue for the next generation, dividing the country in the way abortion has for two decades.

The growing numbers of elderly people are increasingly aware that the most sophisticated and costly medical care in the developed world may prolong life, but still leave them suffering pain and indignity.

Today the nine Supreme Court justices will hear appeals by the states of Washington and New York. The states want to overturn local court

rulings that state bans on doctor-assisted suicide violated the Constitution.

Jack Kevorkian, the retired pathologist who has been present at about 45 deaths and has come to symbolise the "right-to-die" cause, has no part in today's events. The issue "doesn't belong in a courtroom. It's a medical service — it belongs in a clinic, a hospital, a home," he argues.

The Court decision, which will be delivered by the summer, is awaited across the country. Of the 50 states, 49 have banned euthanasia but regard those bans as near-impossible to enforce until the Court ruling. Only Oregon has backed doctor-assisted suicide in law.

The Court's decision is extraordinarily hard to predict. Despite the state bans, America overall has been moving towards legalising euthanasia for two decades. In a land-

mark case in 1976, the parents of Karen Ann Quinlan won court permission to disconnect her life support system.

The Supreme Court has since ruled that people also have the right to refuse medical treatment.

Supporters of doctor-assisted euthanasia brandish examples from Australia's Northern Territory, which legalised the practice in 1995, and from The Netherlands, where it is accepted. Opponents cite religious objections, and a belief that a doctor's role is to prolong life, not end it.

□ Rome: The Vatican yesterday condemned the death of Janet Mills, 52, the second death under Australia's euthanasia law and urged opponents to campaign harder against the "contagion" of assisted suicide, which is "an act of revolt against God, author of life, and a crime against life". (Reuters)

Peru siege rebel fires at police

Lima: Two gunshots, apparently fired by a Tupac Amaru rebel who was seen patrolling the lawn around the besieged Japanese Ambassador's residence here before dawn yesterday, again raised tension around the house where 74 people remain hostage (Gabriella Garnini writes).

The shots appeared to have been fired from the walled garden, in the direction of police posts which are set up outside, a spokesman for the authorities said. The Peruvian police said the rebel "on patrol" had fired at one of their observation posts. No body was injured.

'No big change' in Deng's health

Peking: China has denied that senior leader Deng Xiaoping's health had deteriorated amid a recent bout of reports in Hong Kong that he had been rushed to hospital after periods of unconsciousness (James Pringle writes).

Shen Guofang, of the Foreign Ministry, said there was "no big change" in the 72-year-old leader's health. For an old man, Mr Deng was doing "relatively well", he said.

13 die in blast

Algiers: A powerful car bomb exploded near Place Audin, in the heart of the Algerian capital, killing at least 13 people and injuring 20. No group immediately claimed responsibility. (AP)

Torture plea

Nairobi: Kenya has failed to halt widespread torture involving electric shocks and sexual abuse, Amnesty International said, urging the country's Medical Association to condemn the acts. (Reuters)

Lagos bombing

Lagos: A bomb blew up a Nigerian army bus inside a military camp in Lagos, killing two soldiers and wounding 29 people. It was the third such attack in less than five weeks. (Reuters)

New Sofia leader

Sofia: Bulgaria's ruling Socialists nominated Nikolai Dohrev, 49, the powerful Interior Minister, as Prime Minister to head the country's ninth government since one-party rule ended in 1989. (Reuters)

Tug of love

Peking: Chinese surgeons took 17 hours to reconnect the trunk of Babu, an amorous elephant, after it was severed when it caught in a grating while the animal was playing with a female at a zoo. (AFP)

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Forgotten Gandhi 'remains' to be given Ganges rite

FROM CHRISTOPHER THOMAS IN DELHI

THE purported ashes of Mahatma Gandhi, father of independent India, are to be immersed in the Ganges, the holiest of India's rivers. They have been held almost forgotten in a bank vault since 1950.

The Supreme Court ruled that the ashes, in a wooden box, should go on a tour of India before being immersed by Tushar Arun Gandhi, the Mahatma's great grandson. He said he expected to empty them in the Ganges at Allahabad on January 30.

He has fought a two-year legal battle for possession of the ashes, deposited in the State Bank of India on November 29, 1950, in the eastern city of Cuttack by an Orissa state official. It is not known why they were there or who had possession of them.

Non-denominational prayers are to be said when the ashes are immersed in honour of Gandhi's struggle for inter-religious harmony.

The Orissa state government questioned whether the ashes were those of the Mahatma. The Supreme Court ruled that there was no reason

to doubt the entry in the bank's safe deposit register.

Gandhi, assassinated by a Hindu fanatic in 1948, was cremated in Delhi. He is largely irrelevant in modern India, and for the first time there is public questioning of some of his "experiments with truth". Extremist Hindus, who hate him for his supposed "appeasement" of Muslims, recently mocked his experiments with sexual discipline, which included sleeping alongside two women a third of his age to prove that he had overcome desire.

Gandhi once said he was convinced he had conquered sexual desire until the morning he awoke in a state of arousal after an erotic dream at the age of 67. He called it his darkest hour, "a frightful experience" 30 years after taking the vow of *brahmacharya* (sexual abstinence). He went on a fast to contemplate what had happened.

Bal Thackeray, leader of the fanatical Shiv Sena in Bombay, called Gandhi a "complete fraud" in his professed *brahmacharya*. Shiv Sena has links with the RSS, the secretive Hindu brotherhood that inspired Nathuram Godse to assassinate Gandhi.

The Congress party, which led India to independence under Gandhi's guidance, called Shiv Sena's criticism of the work of "sick minds". All Hindu political parties, save for those on the extreme Right, have condemned Mr Thackeray, who has expressed admiration for Hitler.

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Juppé flies into row over appetite for forbidden songbird



The ortolan: not a meal for the faint-hearted.

FROM BEN MACINTYRE
IN PARIS

ALAIN JUPPÉ, the French Prime Minister, has flown into another damaging row by admitting to a taste for ortolan or hunting, the songbird beloved by traditional Gallic gourmands but technically protected under French law.

In a recent interview with *Elle* magazine, he discussed the bird, regarded as one of the greatest delicacies in French cuisine, and remarked: "The funny thing about ortolan is that it is forbidden to hunt or sell them but, in the best places, you can still find them."

M. Juppé described in detail how he had snacked on ortolan at a recent Gascon feast, prompting fury among animal welfare cam-

paigners, including former actress Brigitte Bardot. The French League for the Protection of Birds has filed an official complaint with the European Commission.

The dispute has overtones of elitism, since the ortolan is regarded as a dish reserved for the rich and powerful, which once prompted Balzac to write: "And as for us, do you think we eat ortolans?"

Adding to the furore is a new book about François Mitterrand which reveals the late President's relish for the little creatures. It describes how he once ate two at a single sitting, along with 30 oysters, *foie gras* and a capon.

"While the homeless are dying of hunger and cold, this gastronomic display by ministers and presidents is not only unacceptable

but revolting, thundered Mme Bardot. "Sirs, have a little decency."

The ortolan is a Eurasian garden and field bird which grows fat in France before heading to North Africa and the Middle East in the autumn. Measuring about 6.2in, with a greyish head and pale yellow throat, the bird's song of six or seven notes is similar to the related yellow hammer.

When it lands in France, the ortolan is in a legal limbo. Since it does not figure on the list of approved game birds, hunting it is technically illegal, but since it is absent from the list of protected species, local authorities often turn a blind eye. Ornithologists say the number of ortolans has dropped in recent years since up to 150,000 are

trapped every year as they migrate across southwest France. An ortolan weighing less than an ounce can fetch up to Fr300 (£40) on the black market during August and September.

The ortolan is not a meal for the faint-hearted. After being trapped, the birds are fattened on grain for three weeks. The *coup de grâce* is administered, according to the gruesome recipe described in *Le Figaro* newspaper, "with its beak in armagnac, having been deprived of its tiny gizzard".

The bird is then garnished and baked for seven minutes. It is eaten whole, bones, innards and all, crunched in the mouth into a paste and swallowed — a spectacle so unsightly that it traditionally takes place behind a napkin.

"The taste is marvellous, rather like that of *foie gras* with truffles," according to *Le Figaro*.

M. Juppé's injudicious remarks have left him with two unpalatable options: if he stands by his taste buds, the sin of chewing up small songbirds is likely to dent his rock-bottom popularity among environmentalists. But if he renounces his affection for the dish, he will anger not only traditional chefs but also the powerful hunting lobby.

The National Union in Defence of Traditional Hunting has already waded in. "Ortolan hunting has been practised since Roman times and the species has still not disappeared, as far as I know," Jean-Jacques Hague, head of the hunting union, said.



Juppé: snacked on bird at recent Gascon feast

Kidnappings were part of Cold War, says ex-spymaster

FROM ROGER BOYES IN DÜSSELDORF

MARKUS WOLF, the former Communist spy-master, yesterday rejected official charges of kidnapping agents during the Cold War, and in a rare flash of public anger and passion, launched a blistering attack on the German authorities.

Herr Wolf, who for 30 years led East Germany's spying offensive against the West, was in combative mood on the first day of his trial in the windowless top-security Düsseldorf courtroom originally built for the hearings against his most successful agent, Günther Guillaume. The prosecutor, he said, wanted to put him "in the same ranks as common criminals. I reject these attempts."

Much of the prosecution case was based, he said, on "pure fabrication". He was guided throughout his espionage career by patriotic motives. "Neither the constitution nor the laws of the country I served" were violated.

The German authorities were denied a chance to jail Herr Wolf for treason and espionage three years ago, because the Constitutional Court ruled that this would violate his right to be treated equally with West German spies: all spies should be equal before the law. Instead, the prosecutor has "advanced three cases from the early days of the Cold War, and is pressing criminal charges of kidnapping and assault. The best cases include the seizing, in 1955, of a 26-year-old West Berlin woman who was working as a translator for the US authorities in Berlin."

Herr Wolf's East German spies tried unsuccessfully to turn the translator, Christa

Trapp, the spy-master — reading in a firm voice from an eight-page declaration — argued that Western intelligence services carried out many abductions in the east. His defence over the coming months would include a catalogue of Western attempts to force or blackmail East Germans into espionage activity. Kidnapping, he made clear, was simply part of Cold War espionage.

Another accusation read out in court was that Herr Wolf approved the arrest of Georg Angerer, a printer and former Gestapo collaborator in occupied Norway. The man knew Willy Brandt — later to be West German Chancellor — as a resistance fighter in Norway. Herr Wolf's agents tried to force Herr Angerer to smear Brandt as a Gestapo informer, and thus destroy his political career. The printer was held for six months, and put under psychological pressure, but ultimately the plan collapsed.

In his defence yesterday, Herr Wolf declared that "the exposure of former Nazis was

in contrast to the activities of the West German intelligence organisations — part of the legitimate mission of the East German services". The arrest warrant for Herr Angerer bears the signature Markus Wolf, and is thus one of the few compromising documents against the spy-master.

The final charge concerns a 1962 abduction of a defecting Stasi officer, who was lured to Austria, beaten up, and then returned to East Germany, where he faced a military tribunal and served 10 years' hard labour. According to the prosecutor, Herr Wolf supervised the operation. Herr Wolf denied having any such powers, and blamed other members of the Interior Ministry.

The 73-year-old spy chief — sporting a tan after a skiing holiday — seemed confident of victory. The prosecution case depends heavily on Ms Trapp's readiness to return from the United States to testify. But she is reluctant to do so. The defence will argue that kidnapping charges — one of them 42 years old — fall under the statute of limitations, and can no longer be prosecuted.

Herr Wolf said yesterday that the authorities were motivated by revenge.

The Constitutional Court ruling against punishing East German spies had, he said, angered Bonn. "The federal prosecutors were among the ungracious winners of the Cold War, and are now showing themselves to be 'bad losers'." The prosecutor, however, is sure he can demonstrate Herr Wolf's involvement — as organiser or supervisor — in the crimes. Organisational charts show that he had direct responsibility for such missions.



Patriarch Aleksii presides at a Russian Orthodox Christmas service in Moscow yesterday. The feast has re-emerged as an important event in Russia

Moscow marks Christmas in rebuilt cathedral

FROM RICHARD BEESTON
IN MOSCOW

MILLIONS of worshippers flocked to churches across Russia yesterday to celebrate the Orthodox Christmas.

Patriarch Aleksii II, leader of the Russian Orthodox Church, led a congregation of hundreds in Moscow for the first Christmas service held in the country's most famous church, the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour since its rebuilding. The church, Russia's largest, was destroyed in 1931 by Stalin during the anti-religious purges and later Khrushchev turned the site into a swimming pool.

The cathedral's multimillion-pound reconstruction over the past two years,

paid for in part by private donations, has stood as a symbol of the rebirth of Orthodoxy in Russia, where churches and monasteries once again are coming to life.

Although the new year remains the main Russian family holiday, Orthodox Christmas, celebrated according to the Julian calendar on January 7, has re-emerged as an important religious event, marked yesterday by packed churches and live television coverage of the services.

The country's political elite, made up mostly of former members of the Soviet Communist Party, was not slow in renewing its courtship of the Church and its tens of millions of adherents. President Yeltsin, who had

been due to go to church, missed the Christmas celebrations and instead spent most of the day in bed at his country home, apparently struck down by a flu virus which has affected several members of his family.

That left the spotlight yesterday on Yuri Luzhkov, the capital's stocky Mayor, who led dignitaries inside the newly finished interior of the cathedral, whose reconstruction is largely due to his personal efforts.

The cathedral, which took 60 years to build in thanksgiving for Russia's defeat of Napoleon, was stripped of its icons, marble and gold leaf before being dynamited on Stalin's orders. Its reconstruction, which is due to be completed this year in time for Mos-

cow's 850th anniversary celebrations, is the centrepiece of several grand building schemes launched by the ambitious Mayor, whom many regard as a future Kremlin leader.

Mr Luzhkov, 51, who is a close friend and supporter of President Yeltsin, won a 90 per cent majority at his mayoral re-election last summer in Moscow. He has since made clear that his ambitions stretch far beyond the limits of the sprawling capital.

In the past few months, he has spoken out on several national issues; in particular he has denounced the Chechnya peace deal as a sell-out and has vehemently challenged Ukraine's sovereignty over Sevastopol. Crimea's disputed port city.

Russian monkeys return to steppes after space mission

FROM ROBIN LODGE IN MOSCOW

TWO Russian monkeys safely touched down on the steppes of northern Kazakhstan yesterday after a two-week mission in space to test the effects of weightlessness on animals and plants.

A Russian Space Forces spokesman said the Bion-11 capsule containing the two Macaque monkeys, Captain Muktik and his colleague Lapik, as well as a collection of snails, insects and plants, returned to earth early on the Russian Orthodox Christmas Day.

The craft was launched on December 24 from the Plesetsk cosmodrome, in northern Russia, where the monkeys had been trained to press pedals and computer keys to get food and drink.

The animals are now undergoing medical tests near the landing site and will then be flown to Moscow, where the Institute of Medical and Biological Problems will study how they readjust to gravity.

The \$30 million (£17 million) mission was supported by NASA, America's space agency, which put up half the funds, and France, Ukraine and Lithuania.

The space flight, which went ahead despite protests from animal rights groups in America, is the latest in a programme which started in 1973. Further missions are planned next year. The data will help in planning manned flights.

□ Cape Canaveral: NASA cleared the launch this week-end of the space shuttle Atlantis to bring back the astronaut John Blaha from Russia's Mir space station.

Mr Blaha, who has been living on Mir since September, will be replaced by Jerry Linenger, who will also spend four months aboard the station. It will be the fifth time the shuttle has docked with Mir.

Technicians have tightened the screws in the gearboxes of Atlantis's hatches. A loose one jammed a hatch on her sister shuttle, Columbia in November, forcing the cancellation of two spacewalks.

Engineers concluded that Atlantis's solid-fuel rocket boosters were safe, despite damage that was caused to nozzle insulation on the last two shuttle flights.

Meanwhile, it was announced that ArianeSpace plans to launch at least 18 satellites this year. Roger Solari, the director of ArianeSpace-Kourou, said the number might increase if the new Ariane 5 rocket, which can carry three satellites, is introduced commercially. (AP, AFP)



Captain Muktik, shoddy before blasting off

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YOUR HOME IS AT RISK IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON A MORTGAGE OR OTHER LOAN SECURED ON IT.

Anjana Ahuja on how the right nutrients now can prevent serious illnesses later



Lindsey Irvine, left, Maria Mann, centre, and Ian Tyler found their health improved after taking Antony Haynes's advice

Simple tests to put you in tip-top condition

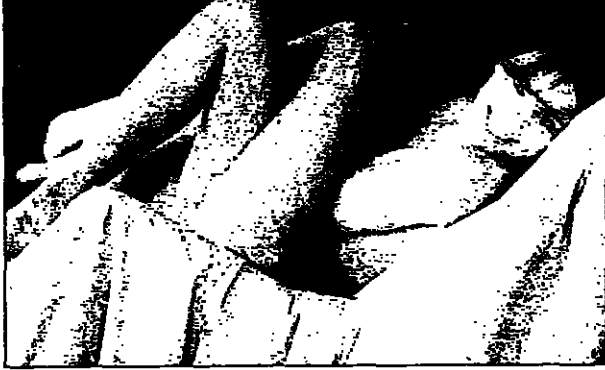
PRACTITIONERS of optimum nutrition insist we can all eat our way to tip-top health. Its three principles are simple — each of us is biochemically unique and therefore requires a different balance of foods; no one nutrient can work alone; and lifestyle and environment influence our dietary needs.

Providing nutritional corrections for small imbalances can help to prevent more serious conditions. Antony Haynes, a nutrition consultant, claims to be able to offer "total or significant relief" from an almost endless range of complaints. Examples include stress, angina, arthritis, allergies, multiple sclerosis, infertility, acne, addictions and even poor memory.

After an initial one-hour consultation, three main tests are at Mr Haynes's disposal. Samples are sent either to a laboratory in London or one in America for analysis.

The first is the Adrenal Stress Index Test, which measures the levels and ratio of two important stress hor-

The DISCOVERY DIET GUIDE



mones, cortisol and DHEA. The levels of these hormones vary throughout the day; this is called a circadian rhythm. The test involves taking saliva samples four times during one day. "Apart from telling people not to drink caffeine, this shows hormone levels over a real day," Mr Haynes says. "Saliva is much

easier to collect than blood or urine. One can also measure hormones more effectively. Normal hospitals don't measure the relationship between these hormones. Yet this index can explain sleeping problems, low sex drive, chronic fatigue, a stressed-out and vulnerable immune system and an underactive thyroid. We can also catch borderline conditions that would otherwise be missed."

Digestive tests come next. A healthy digestive system processes food and converts it into energy. It breaks down food and sorts nutrients from waste products. Vitamins and minerals are carried across the wall of the gut into the bloodstream, and the remainder is sent through the body as waste. The balance is a delicate one — the gastro-intestinal tract, or the lining of the gut, must allow nutrients to pass into the body while excluding harmful chemicals.

Mr Haynes says: "Another of the main problems with digestion is leaky-gut syndrome. This is when big food molecules and toxins leak out of the gut when they are not supposed to, and the immune system cannot cope." One of the main organs affected is the liver, which helps to detoxify the body. This build-up of unwanted chemicals can cause disorders such as arthritis, skin complaints and food allergies.

The proteins upon which the nutrients hitch their ride into the bloodstream can also be damaged. This makes them less able to do their job, triggering deficiencies.

A simple urine test can pick up this syndrome. Mr Haynes explains: "The patient drinks two undigestible carbony-

drates, which should be secreted through urine six hours later. If large amounts are not secreted, there is a problem."

Naturally, stool analysis features. These examinations indicate how effective the digestive system is, how well nutrients are being absorbed and the levels of friendly and harmful bacteria.

Perhaps the most impressive test is the Osteoporosis Risk Evaluation. Even though the devastating effects of this bone-wasting disease do not usually become apparent until middle or old age, doctors now think that the factors which make a woman more susceptible are set decades earlier.

Scans can show the disease once it appears, but by that time it is usually too late. Mr Haynes offers a urine test, which claims to measure the rate of bone turnover in young people. Bone is continually being broken down and renewed. However, if the bone is breaking down faster than it is being replaced, bone loss occurs.

As the old bone degrades, two types of collagen, which knit bone together, are secreted into the urine. The levels of these collagen crosslinks provide a biochemical marker of bone loss. The higher the levels of these knitting chemicals, the worse the loss is.

This, in turn, will indicate whether someone is at risk of developing osteoporosis. The individual is then advised on how to fend off the condition, by raising calcium intake and exercising more.

Mr Haynes says: "We have just begun to offer the test, so we don't have any follow-up studies, but there are extensive studies in America showing it can pick up signs of early bone loss very quickly."

Maria Mann is a 30-year-old medical secretary. She is married and lives in Wimbledon. At the beginning of last year I started getting ill every month. I was vomiting, had diarrhoea, and was so exhausted I had trouble getting up off the bathroom floor. I kept taking time off work. Antony gave me a very in-depth questionnaire. He suggested a leaky gut test and a liver test.

The tests showed that I was suffering from a leaky gut. I



The most impressive test is the Osteoporosis Risk Evaluation, the bone-wasting disease that affects mainly women

WE all know the feeling. A few headaches here, a spot of exhaustion there. You know you're not functioning at full throttle, but don't want to take up your doctor's time unnecessarily. After all, there's nothing actually wrong with you, is there?

This, according to Mr Haynes, is the problem with the sort of medicine practised by GPs. "Modern medicine suppresses the symptoms of disease only once they appear," says Mr Haynes, the founder of the Better Health Clinic in central London. "It doesn't root out the underlying cause and can't measure when things begin to fail."

To make the comparison simpler, he asks me to consider an analogy while sitting at my desk: "Imagine that the ceiling represents good health, the desk

IT'S IN THE BALANCE

represents disease and the floor symbolises death. Ideally, you will be hovering near the ceiling. But doctors can only help you once you reach the desk. We can pick up the signs before you reach the desk, and get you back up towards the ceiling."

Mr Haynes started as a sports scientist, then studied at the Institute of Optimum Nutrition. He is a practitioner of functional medicine, a branch of complementary medicine which claims to be able to spot the subtle signs — "imbalances in function" — that things are going wrong, and in many cases pinpoint the cause.

Mr Haynes and Bharti Makhijani, a fellow nutritionist based at the Life

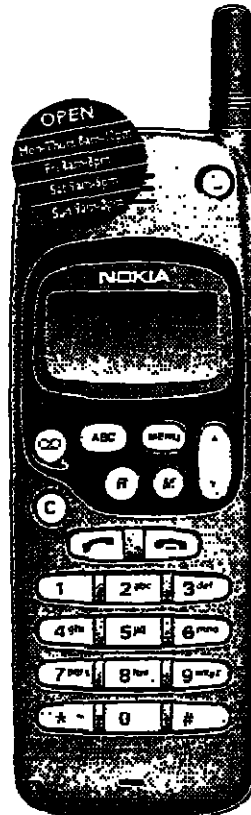
Centre in Kensington, then advise on how to eat in order to optimise this balance. Once an imbalance is identified, a dietary plan is prescribed, including meal suggestions and vitamin supplements if appropriate. He says: "I have written about 2,000 plans, and no two have ever been the same."

"You have to give different advice to different people. The requirements of a sedentary person will be different from those of a very active person, although I would probably recommend that the sedentary person does some exercise."

Providing education is also important. Mr Haynes says: "Doctors don't have time to educate their patients. This allows people to take responsibility for their own health."

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was told to stay off wheat, rye, oats, barley, processed sugar foods, dairy products, caffeine, high fat foods and alcohol. He also gave me a powdered drink called Ultraclear Sustain to take three times a day. It was disgusting but worth it — I now don't have any symptoms at all. As for all the other things, I think about 80 per cent of them have gone.

Lindsey Irvine, 29, is a professional golfer. She is single and lives in Haywards Heath, Sussex.

I have always suffered from eczema but at the beginning of last year it was worse than ever. My eyes were swollen and one side of my face was completely red, and sometimes it would weep. It was awful.

I went to an allergy specialist, who said that I was allergic to virtually everything I was eating. Even though I almost stopped eating, it didn't change anything, and by this time I had lost a lot of weight. Antony suspected it was something to do with my adrenal glands because my energy was so low. It was possible that my immune system was suffering as a result. I also had a stool

test, which showed that there was an imbalance in my gut and that, rather than having an allergy, I wasn't digesting food properly. I also had the wrong type of bacteria. He gave me several supplements and advised me to cut out dairy foods, wheat, caffeine, sugar and animal fats. I have stuck to his advice since mid-August and I feel brilliant.

Ian Tyler, 32, is a commodities trader near the City. He is married and lives in London.

In the middle of 1995 I developed a stiff back. My GP referred me to a specialist who discovered that the base of the spine was inflamed. He gave me some pills but the condition didn't go away. Instead it got worse. I could no longer play sport and some days I couldn't walk. By February last year I couldn't move.

Somebody suggested the Life Centre. I saw Bharti Makhijani. She gave me supplements and vitamins, including a powdered drink called Enteroguard, to regenerate my gut. On a second visit, Bharti suggested I have the Adrenal Stress Index Test. I turned out to be the worst case she had ever seen. She put me on more vitamins and minerals, including Vitamin C and concentrated fish oils. After two weeks I improved dramatically.

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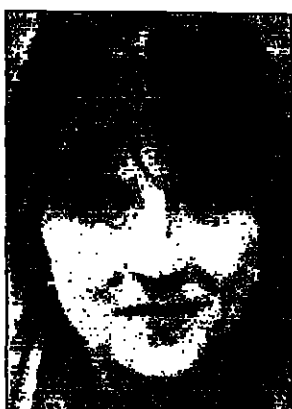
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Is this the start of something big?



The lingerie look: A slip dress in the Philosophy range by Alberta Ferretti



You can keep your lacy scanties, what women really cannot resist is a good, stout pair of drawers. And they're back in a big way, says Jane Shilling

There was a time when an Englishwoman's underwear was an entirely private matter — a confidential arrangement between herself and Marks & Spencer. The only time the whole business ventured, so to speak, into the public arena, was a couple of times a year, at Christmas and birthdays, when one's Significant Other, unless properly trained, would sheepishly produce a ribboned box containing a microscopic three-piece set of something tragically unsuitable, made from scratchy synthetic lace.

The size, on these occasions, tends to show evidence of an onset of wild panic (or reprehensible fantasy) in the lingerie shop, the colour (horrid shades of cerise, mauve or eau-de-nil) is enough to bring on migraine, and the solution to the whole sorry business lies in a visit, after a tactful interval, to the Oxfam shop. This aside, and despite everything that the advertisers would have us believe to the contrary, there exists in the mind of the British female absolutely no connection between underwear and sex, still less underwear and fashion. What we require from our underwear is that it should be warm, decent and comfortable — and above all, that it should not Draw Attention To Itself.

Season after recent season, however, the catwalks of Paris and Milan have been thronged with slips of girls with nothing between them and the elements but a weeny bra worn under a cobweb blouse, or a couple of square inches of bias-cut satin. Still, this is the sort of thing we expect from the Continent. On this side of the Channel, the siren lure of underwear as outerwear continues to fall on deaf ears.

"Come out in her smalls, what does she think she looks like?" muses the Englishwoman, as she turns the pages of a glossy magazine during her annual visit to the hairdressers. "Catch her dear, poor dear," she mentally adds, warm in the cosy embrace of her Damart vest... "This season," enthuses the editorial, "you will be partying in your petty." Harumph, thinks the Englishwoman, resolving to get her faithful old taffeta warhorse dry-cleaned for the umpteenth time.

But good gracious, hang on a minute, what is this, shining like a beacon from every single new season's collection? It is a pair of big knickers, that's what. And when I say big, I mean huge. Suddenly they are everywhere, knickers of a size and voluminousness not seen since your grandma last changed into her bathing costume on the beach beneath a modest tent of floral towelling some time back in 1963.

In the spring collections, Romeo Gigli puts them under a lampshade-shaped shift of glittery tulle; at Prada they are waist-high under blood-red chiffon, while Anna Molinari offers a tantalising vision of white schoolgirl pants splashed with blood-red puppies

beneath a tube of Elastoplast-coloured crochet. Versace has possibly the most splendid pair of all — an imposing article in lemon-yellow satin of a cut so generous that it would undoubtedly double as a most efficient parachute.

Now, Englishwomen have a very special place in their hearts for big knickers. It is all to do with our education. When small we were exhorted by our mamas to put a clean pair on in the mornings *no matter what*; at school we were made to wear them for gymnastics; those of us educated by nuns think fondly of hours idled away in ribald speculation as to the sisters' underpinnings... In short, you can keep your lacy scanties. What we really cannot resist is a stout pair of drawers.

And stout is what these improbable additions to the lexicon of high fashion are. They have high waists, and lace-trimmed legs, and Firm Control panels to the front (and in one arresting example, the rear as well). There is very little chance that Dolce and Gabbana's leopardskin bloomers will disappear up the crack in your bottom.

And what perfect heaven to have that troublesome hardy perennial, the Visible Panty Line, suddenly transformed into a positive virtue. It is enough to make one rush straight out to Knightsbridge for a close encounter into Haute Couture.

Except that if one does, one is liable to be disappointed. The buyers have not fallen in love with Big Knickers. They do not think the customers are ready for them. "I can't see people walking through Knightsbridge dressed like that," says Lucille Lewin of Whistles. "For the beach, maybe," says Françoise Tessier of Browns, "but not in the street. The husbands won't stand for it."

Now, in France and Italy you can well imagine that a man, finding his wife dressed in Sonia Rykiel's wisp of black lace with salmon-coloured knicks, would commence to yell and then order her to change into something decent on pain of stopping her dress allowance. Here, though, one can be fairly sure that if one appeared in Versace's lemon-yellow *piece de resistance* and said, "Darling, tell me honestly, what do you think?" one's husband would raise his glance momentarily from the sports pages and say nothing more controversial than "Mmm. Very nice. What a bloody shower in Zimbabwe, eh?"

Still, all is not lost. Couture knickers may be thin on the ground, but the high street knows better than to underestimate the potential market for a proper pair of pants. Hennes and Miss Selfridge and Sloggi and faithful old Marks & Spencer are heaving with stretch damask and lace insets and criss-cross Lycra panels, and not a thong in sight. And I myself have seen, at Rigby & Peller, a capacious garment in pale pink silk and cream net, which, if it turned up on my birthday in a ribboned box, definitely wouldn't be making the trip to the Oxfam shop.



Dolce & Gabbana's bloomers



Kate Moss proudly shows off her big panties, courtesy of Dolce & Gabbana

WHERE TO BUY THE BEST BIG KNICKERS

Warners white lace control panties, £23 M-XL. National inquiry number: 01159 795 796.

Peach "Mistral" big knickers by Chamos, £14.50. From all major department stores.

White French knickers by Marks & Spencer, £7.50.

Big blue sports knickers by Miss Selfridge, £8.00.

Black big satin knickers with rear rilly edging, £50 from Agent Provocateur, 8 Broadwick Street, London W1. Tel: 0171-439 0229.

Blue floral devoré French knickers, £20, by Eley Kishimoto at

Pellicano 63 South Molton Street, W1. Tel: 0171-629 2205.

Ivory satin floral print big knickers by Prima Donna, £34.50, from Rigby and Peller, 2 Hans Road SW3. Tel: 0171-589 9293.

Black and grey check full briefs by Marie Jo, £37.50, from Rigby and Peller.

White high-waisted big knickers by Barbara, £44.50, from Rigby and Peller.

White elasticated waist knickers with rilly lace edging by Patricia, £27.50, from Rigby and Peller.

The discreet handbag makes a comeback

Stylish women need something classic to clutch, says Grace Bradberry

The handbag is making a quiet comeback. Sales of designer leather goods are up, and this ski season Eurotrash woman has chosen Dior's Lady Di handbag as the perfect match for her real fur coat.

But handbags no longer possess the brazen personalities they did ten years ago, when they would clank into any gathering, gold chains rattling, outside logos flashing. By comparison, they're now discreet little things, at best suave and elegant, at worst mousey.

Even the chicest among them do not like to shout too loud. Lulu Guinness's are quietly witty; Anya Hindmarch's are shapely, smooth and never shout wear it or status; Prada's have, as everyone now knows, the tiniest of triangular labels.

Brash is out, and the old-fashioned values such as discretion and modesty are returning. A small handbag once again denotes class, a large one poor taste. Reactionaries with money to spend, little in the way of personality,

and not a lot to carry round, will be delighted. Rebellion is on the horizon for the rest of us. Forget Evita and her ditty little Dior bags, what did Che Guevara carry his kit around in? Not a collection of tattered Marks & Spencer carriers, one imagines.

No matter how much we loathe the baggage that comes with bags, it's impossible to dissociate ourselves from something when it's clasped in our hands. And since psychoanalysts would have us believe that handbags symbolise a woman's sexual organs, it's a terrible mistake to

transport one's belongings in something that's saggy and battered.

If labels are important, and your essentials compact, then a designer make-up bag could solve the dilemma. For £45, you can nip into Prada and buy a soft, black, zip-up case, that will fit perfectly at the side of the lunchtable, or can be kept firmly under your foot if you don't wish to pay.

S hopping bags — roomy and utilitarian — have been fashion items in their own right for some time. Portobello Princesses have a

whole stock: coloured nylon string bags from the Costran shop for their guavas, checked Mexican bags imported by Emma Bernhardt for browsing the second-hand shops. When entering a chichi boutique, a well stuffed, apparently brand new designer bag is best — it suggests serious intent.

Sadly, you can no longer take a heavily logo-ed carrier bag anywhere but a shop, as Kate Reardon, fashion director of Tatler, points out: "If you're not going to carry a handbag it should mean you're secure enough not to need the designer label at all."

Ironically, this can make a DKNY bag more useful than one from the Donna Karan mainline. Even so, you'll have to part with £150 for an item sufficiently bulky to merit the full-size carrier.

But there is only one way in which you can avoid this minefield altogether. "The best thing is your boyfriend's pocket," says Kate Reardon. "That's the point of going shopping with a man. They're mobile handbags."

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A passion for high adventure



Sir Francis Chichester, left, was knighted for sailing single-handed around the world. Richard Branson, above, follows in the footsteps of the great adventurers. Howard Hughes, right, revelled in his record-breaking flights

In the tradition of explorers and adventurers before him, Richard Branson has given back to the British public a character feared lost forever.

He has restored our love for conquest and the thrill of danger with a plot worthy of Jules Verne. With no new lands to discover, peaks to conquer, or ocean depths to plumb, there was only one option left — upwards and upwards in the flight path of Puffins.

By popular consent, Mr Branson can now claim the title "Britain's last great adventurer". His own money, enthusiasm and courage propel him.

His predecessors would applaud. Like the Virgin magnate, they too had a romantic streak. Adventure was to be undertaken for its own sake — not for commercial gain or personal glory.

But there was always an element of obsession, perhaps a touch of madness, with some. They would test themselves and their fellows to the very limits.

Scott of the Antarctic's reputation has been smeared by claims that his mistakes en route for the South Pole cost brave men their lives. Forty years ago, Sir Raymond Priestley, who survived as a member of the expedition's northern party, attacked his leader for "disorganisation and psychologically handicapping his men".

The attack caused a public outcry even though Sir Raymond tempered his criticism with praise. "Scott's errors were more than atoned for by the manner of his death," he said.

An English upper-class sang-froid characterised the great adventurers of the past. They never quaked at danger or shied away from impossible odds.

Among the Boys' Own hall of fame luminaries who inspired the young Mr Branson was Colonel Percy Fawcett, a British explorer who surveyed the borders of Bolivia and Brazil before disappearing in the Amazon forest.

As Richard Branson attempts his record-breaking flight, Bill Frost looks at the intrepid explorers who preceded him

The colonel's obituary in 1925 spoke of his "dangerous but admirable passion for adventure". Like Mr Branson, Fawcett always paid his own way. In the course of his expeditions to uncharted jungles he was to become obsessed with tribal legends about mysterious light-skinned people, and fabulous cities. Finding these "castles in the air", as one commentator

the subject of contemporary myth and legend. So effectively had he captured the public imagination that stories circulated for 30 years after his disappearance that Fawcett was alive and well in the jungle. The author Evelyn Waugh used the Fawcett legend as the basis for the dark conclusion to his novel *A Handful of Dust*.

The Victorian mountaineer Edward

the lone eagle. In an era of flappers, gangsters, bathtub gin and self-indulgence, the shy, laconic Lindbergh was almost a god to his countrymen.

When, five years after the epic flight, his baby son was kidnapped from the Lindbergh home in a bucolic section of New Jersey, the nation was stunned. And then, when the infant was found buried four miles from the house, the whole world was enraptured.

After the killer was found, tried, and sentenced to the electric chair, Lindbergh was to settle in Kent. However, his passion for adventure was dead.

A New York newspaper columnist of the day remarked: "He was never happier than when alone at the controls. Reality was Lindbergh's problem."

Howard Hughes, perhaps the most mysterious of the great adventurers, suffered similar difficulties in later life, although his record-breaking flight around the world — three days, 19 hours and 17 minutes — saw him lauded as a national hero.

The solitude he craved 20 years later was in sharp contrast to his obvious pride when greeted by spectators at Floyd Bennett airport, New York. With his crew of four, Hughes had smashed a world record and "experienced the greatest adventure life has to offer".

He added: "I am glad to be back. The worst thing about the trip was lack of sleep, just four hours in the whole trip."

The adventurer must also be prepared to suffer a hard tack diet and hunger. Sir Francis Chichester, the lone sailor who achieved fame at a pensionable age in 1967 after his circumnavigation of the world in *Gypsy Moth IV*, frequently dreamt of a fried breakfast.

Sir Robin Knox-Johnston, a yachtsman inspired by Sir Francis and the first person to sail non-stop around the world in 1968-69, indulged in food fantasies too.

Perhaps Sir Francis best summed up the spirit of the breed in the journal he wrote while at sea.

"The adventurous amateur sets himself tasks from which seasoned professionals might shrink. He plays his hand in the grand manner, triumphantly trumping the aces of all comers in the great game of adventure."

"It is only by submitting to trial that an individual can learn to know what is in him. Most of us are content to pass over the surface of life. We have not."



Percy Fawcett, the explorer who disappeared in the Amazon jungle

described them, became his mission. On his final trip to the Amazon basin, Colonel Fawcett was accompanied by his son Jack, 21, and another young man, Raleigh Rimell. They set out from the town of Cuabell on the edge of the Mato Grosso on April 20, 1925, and by May had reached a place the colonel named Dead Horse Camp.

Plagued by insects and ravaged by fever, they pressed deeper into the jungle in search of the lost city of "Z". Fawcett wrote one last letter to his wife — that was the last that was ever heard of him. Rescue expeditions were launched and some of the party's equipment was found. It was believed that Fawcett "paid the highest price for his pursuit of a great adventure".

In the absence of a body he became

Whympy was hewn from the same rough stone as his fellow adventurers. Neither deprivation nor danger deterred him as he set about carving his reputation. When in 1865 he finally reached the summit of the Matterhorn, he was undoubtedly the most celebrated "alpinist" in Europe.

He was soon to cast his eye over more exotic summits and decided to explore the Andes.

The freelance adventurer, whose lesse on fame began in earnest during Victoria's reign, would seldom suffer fools or cowards lightly.

Some, though, have no need of others. The aviator Charles Lindbergh, who electrified his country in 1927 by making the first solo crossing of the Atlantic, revelled in his nickname —

HOW WOULD LLOYD'S EXPLORE THE POLICY RISKS?

THE MAN at the Association of British Insurers was adamant — there is no such thing as a standard explorers' all-risk insurance policy.

Mario Polo, Captain Cook, Scott of the Antarctic, Charles Lindbergh and now Richard Branson each have to thrash out the details of individually tailored policies.

"The first thing insurance companies will want to know is their claims experience [claims history]," said the expert. "The claims experience of an adventurer setting off from Italy, taking in the Dutch East Indies and ending up in America is difficult to say."

Every explorer has to be looked at on their own merits. For example, some parts of the world are more dangerous than others. How do you measure the risks of hauling sledges across the icy wastes of the Antarctic with trekking up-country in Borneo's tropical rainforests?

The Times went to a hard-nosed Lloyd's underwriter for his assessment of the risk when it comes to the world's greatest — and sometimes endearingly eccentric — explorers. Reg Brown, underwriter of R.E. Brown and Others, Syndicate 702 at Lloyd's, graded them in an all-time risk league table. Starting with the riskiest, they are:

1 Scott of the Antarctic; 2 Percy Fawcett; 3 Edward Whympy; 4 Captain Cook; 5 Christopher Columbus; 6 Charles Lindbergh; 7 Howard Hughes; 8 Sir Francis Chichester; 9 Richard Branson; 10 Sir Robin Knox-Johnston.

Mr Brown said that it is easy to underwrite with hindsight. Of course, we now know that Scott and Fawcett never returned. However, by the standards of the time, they were taking an enormous risk with their lives, he said.

Generally he believes that the more contemporary the explorer, the less the risk. Advances in communications

and technology mean that rescue is only a mayday call via satellite link away.

"Look at the sailor adrift off Antarctica in his yacht," said Mr Brown. "We know that 100 years ago he would not have a chance, so survivability, particularly for seafarers, is that much greater. I would have said Branson's chances of survivability are considerable, certainly when compared with Scott's."

Mr Brown has a special affection for the exploits of Captain Cook.

"Underwriters in those days might have thought the Earth was flat and that he would one day sail off the edge of the globe."

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Alan Coren



Like a condemned man, I've just enjoyed my last luxury

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times. But though the two cities connected in this surly tale were once again English and French, and while the former was still London, the latter was no longer Paris; it was Nice. And it was precisely what connected them which makes the tale so sorry. What connected them was British Airways. Flying to Nice on New Year's Eve was the best of times; flying back to London three days later was the worst. For December 31, 1996 was the end of an era.

Let us now roll down the arches of the years to the apogee of that era, and peer, through our willing tears, at a full-page colour advertisement from a 1955 *Punch*. It is, after the vogue of the time, not a photograph but a painting, and it presents us with a man and a woman so effulgently handsome, so effortlessly elegant, so patently sophisticated, that beside them Rex Harrison and Margaret Leighton would look like Rab C. Nesbitt and Nora Batty. Fortunately for Rex and Margaret, however, the only person beside them, as they sit, languidly arranged in two pale blue *fauteuils*, is a tall uniformed cove, standing in respectful half-bow, one tanned hand behind his back, offering them something on a silver salver. It is not champagne, because the couple are already holding two golden flutes (the artist, let me say, is a dab hand at titchy bubbles), nor is it slivers of foie gras, because a dish of these nestles toothsome before them on a little table. It is a packet of du Maurier cigarettes.

In which delightful scene, two highly significant further details must be noted: the first is that the lawn uniform is that of British European Airways, and the second is that the brace of tickets lying on the table beside the blobs of goose have "London-Nice" printed on them. Yes, this is an airliner, it is flying to the French Riviera, and its owners are pulling out all the stops to make a couple of smokers happy.

The object of the entire cheesy composition, of course, being to make millions of other smokers happy; they will be made happy by buying du Maurier cigarettes, for in so doing they will confer upon themselves at least a fagworth or two of the shimmering glamour efflorescing, as dazzlingly as kryptonite, off these airborne paragons. That, at any rate, is what the agency told the gathered manufacturers, at which point all the manufacturers began nodding vigorously, because they too could conceive of no more beguiling an aspiration than winging to Nice beside a fetching partner, poking major liver into their faces, sluicing it down with Dom Perignon, and, of course, topping it off with an easeful drag on their splendid product. They would be Scott and Zelda. Edward and Wallis, for was that not what the dream of Nice was all about?

Oh, it was, and — you guessed? — for the Corens too. Soppily addicted these 30 years to both the selfsame dream and the selfsame stimulants, they have flown down to Nice perhaps a hundred times, not mind, eating foie gras, this having been replaced in Economy by a fino sandwich and a tinned peach, but invariably drinking champagne from tiny bottles and puffing cigarettes from large cartons. And always on BA, the last carrier to permit smoking.

Now do you sense it? The era ending? It is December 31, 1996, and the Corens are yet again dreaming their way down to Nice, fazz bubbling into their mouths, smoke wafting from their nostrils, they are happy bunnies in their tiny blue-fogged warren at the rear — until, as the aircraft turns on its final approach over the diamond-strung Promenade des Anglais and the No Smoking signs wink on, the steward leans over (not so very differently from that other steward, in 1955) and tells them they are part of history. For this is the last smoking flight to Nice that there will ever be. On New Year's Day, BA goes gold turkey.

The Corens had not known this. They are agitated. The steward, a kindly man, sees this, and says: "Have you thought about nicotine tablets?" A stricken Coren shakes his head, mute; but he is thinking about them now, as he stubs out the last thing he will ever smoke, up here. He is thinking: you cannot chew a Nicorette and drink champagne at the same time. He is thinking: the No Dreaming sign has just winked on.



Bunkering the Union

John Major has made his first mistake of the election campaign by trying to stifle constitutional debate

When medieval knights departed for the crusades, they lavished gifts on their patron saints. Shrouns would be covered in candles, incense and precious cloths. Charity and forgiveness would be lauded with psalms. The knights would then kiss their ladies goodbye, gather a retinue of black-eyed ruffians and march away to relentless pillage and rape.

Thus do modern politicians embark on an election campaign. The saints of reason and good government are forgotten. Their acolytes are locked in a convent and the keys are hidden. The party leaders rush headlong into the mire. Not even Monty Python could have scripted this week's opening skirmish of the 1997 campaign, a charade of homosexual blackmail, dirty-tricks conspiracy, "presidential" interviews and actors with red tears. We have at least three months of this ahead of us. The prospect is awful.

One reasonable question has nonetheless escaped to survive an extra week. Since we may be at a turning point in the politics of Britain and Britain-in-Europe, might the constitution deserve revision? The question is one on which the "sovereign tribunal of the people" might welcome debate. The start of an election is a good moment for such a debate, when the democratic juices are running but not yet polluted. Hence the recent talks between the Labour and Liberal Democrat parties, to which the Tories were invited. Just one Tory MP, Hugh Dykes, accepted.

Only the most insecure of statesmen could be alarmed by this. Yesterday the Prime Minister was alarmed. He rushed onto the radio to disclaim any interest in constitutional reform. He was strongly opposed to proportional representation, to regional devolution, to changing the House of Lords and to a Bill of Rights. Over all these he expected the right as prime minister to decide. Constitutional change is his prerogative. He signed the Maasricht treaty and refused to submit it to a referendum. Now he refuses to say, before the election, whether he favours any devolution of monetary power to European institutions, though he has changed his mind in favour of a referendum.

As for the people of Scotland, even if they want more control over their government, he would not give it to them. He will not give more control to the people of London either. On the other hand, he is in favour of devolution to the smaller political entity of Northern Ire-

land. One form of devolution, he says, would lead to the "break-up of the United Kingdom", the other apparently not.

This is all intellectually incoherent. Mr Major would argue that the British constitution is incoherent anyway. He expects to do what he likes with it between elections — and remain silent about it during them. Besides, his aides point out, nobody really cares about the subject. It features in no poll or focus group and can thus be dismissed as the plaything of London intellectuals and radicals. The topic has reared its head only so that Labour can conceal its lack of clarity in more substantial areas of policy. The Tories are too cunning to fall into that trap.

The thing about Mr Blair's traps is that the Tories both spot them and fall into them. Were the current constitutional debate a Labour trick, the gambit would be to portray the Tory Government as stale and tired, antagonistic towards the Scots and bereft of vision or inspiration. Yet the trick worked. Mr Major's response was to sound defensive and carp at his critics — which a Prime Minister should be advised never to do. For Mr Major to claim that empowering the Scots to raise (or lower) local taxes would break up the United Kingdom is dishonest. He once enjoyed just such powers as a Lambeth councillor without dire consequences. Besides, if he thinks devolution is so disastrous, why not submit it to open debate? Why this fear of argument? Why this terror of democracy?

If there is one mentality that will cripple the Tories in the coming months, it is that of the bunker. The party is up against a sophisticated enemy that can pick targets at will. "New Labour, New Danger" was not a bad slogan. Attack is a time-honoured form of defence. Mr Major can be an effective performer and the economy is his strong card. Yet every sally ends in self-inflicted injuries, with the bunker sending out an SOS for loyal donors. Downing Street is long past needing loyalty. It needs cool heads.

So there was every reason for the Tories to be open-minded about the constitution. In the first place, Labour's review was perfectly sensible. On any democratic index, Britain lags behind most countries in Europe. It has the fewest elected representatives per thousand voters at each government tier. Its local democracy is weaker than any, and is alone in Europe in enjoying no fiscal discretion. Its internal mechanisms are also quite inadequate to cope with the mass of European legislation descending on Whitehall. All this merits a reassessment, preferably by a royal commission.

Labour's own constitutional proposals are at best half-formed and Mr Blair's pledges are half-hearted. They would offer easy targets for Tory criticism before a commission, establishing which would instantly spike Labour's guns. The whole topic could have been turned to Mr Major's advantage. Instead, Labour has been able to present itself as fresh-thinking, mature and above party pettiness. The Tories have been left pleading that talk of constitutional reform is "profoundly dangerous". Dangerous to whom? The voters can reasonably ask to be judges of that.

The constitution is under review well beyond the gilded chambers of Westminster and Whitehall. Whatever else last night's TV debate on the monarchy may have been, elitist it was not. Nor does any Scot of my acquaintance believe for one minute that all devolution must threaten the Union. Nor does it make sense for the Tories to complain bitterly about Brussels' subsidiarity, yet forbid its consideration in British local government. The huge changes brought in by the Single European Act and Maasricht have radically affected democratic accountability. Had Mr Major taken this aboard, he might have saved himself a great deal of trouble these past four years. Equally seismic changes have occurred in relations between cen-

tral and local government in Britain. Last month's *Economist* survey on democracy predicted that it was the ideology most likely to be transformed in the 21st century, if only because its enemies in the 20th have been trounced. Voters, as they become more prosperous, more leisured and less deferential, will seek new forms of expression. They will want direct participation between elections, other than through the opinion polls beloved of British politicians. They will want more intimate local control of the public sector. They will seek a closer link to elected representatives, and a more sceptical link to government.

No politician can any longer say, as Mr Major does on devolution, that voters should merely trust them to know and do what is best. Politicians who hold to this 19th-century view are losing respect and support. Public trust is transferred to interest groups, lobbies and geographical factions. Intermediate democracy withers and governments rely on opinion polls and referendums, which are poor surrogates for participation.

Democracy may not always need surgery, but it always needs a check-up. Westminster is currently beleaguered from below and above. It is ludicrous to maintain that it is fine as it is. I believe a future Labour government poses as much of a constitutional threat as Tory apathy does. Mr Blair's Labour Party is demonstrating the same centralist authoritarianism as Margaret Thatcher's Tories did. Mr Blair has seized party power from the unions, the constituencies, the conference and even the National Executive Committee. This parallels Margaret Thatcher's seizing of power from what were once the engines of Tory activism, the Tory groups on county and city councils. Both are examples of personalising the constitution.

The Tories may be a lost cause on this topic, but Labour needs to be watched. Mr Blair has not been steady-handed, witness his confusion over London and Scotland. On devolution and rate-capping, he has been as scared of the Treasury *in absentia* as he presumably would be in office. But he has made an effort. He was right to invite bipartisan debate on reform. In doing so, Labour respected both the seriousness of the subject and the intelligence of the electorate. If the great question is now to be locked away for the duration, those who care about these things have at least been given a taste of freedom. They can see where the key is hidden.

Safe in Labour's hands?

Stephen Pollard thinks Tory NHS reforms will stay

Max Clifford's personal vendetta against the Government is based, he tells us, on "what they have done to the health service". The only way to turn the clock back is, he believes, to bring about a Labour government. But Mr Clifford has been listening too much to what Labour says, rather than realising what it will do.

Although Labour now accepts that the market is a good thing, its rhetoric still reflects fundamentalist beliefs about the scope of market mechanisms. The purpose of markets is to bring order out of chaos, but many Labour thinkers still assume that they create chaos out of order. The party's policy towards the NHS is the clearest demonstration.

The administration of the NHS, as well as the concept of a free service, has been one of the pillars of Labour mythology: a national organisation, with up to a million employees, centrally financed and controlled. So when Margaret Thatcher surprised even her own Health Secretary during the 1987 election campaign by talking of the need for administrative reform, the Labour Party was united in its hostility. Decentralisation by means of the internal market was seen as an unnecessary threat to the integrity of the service — ultimately as an attempt at privatisation.

Although Tony Blair has changed Labour a good deal, its quasi-religious conviction that provision of healthcare by anyone but the State is immoral, and that the old centralised NHS administration was well-run perfect, means that Labour's health thinking has yet to be hit by reality. But on the first day of the next Labour government, reality will enforce a rethink.

Until very recently, Labour was opposed to the separation of purchasers and providers within the service which is an integral part of the reforms. But the overwhelming evidence is that the split works. And many of those who have pointed this out are Labour supporters. So, very gingerly, the policy has been changed. No revelation has been claimed, but Labour has gradually stopped attacking the split in speeches and documents. No one who speaks for Labour will now criticise it. They will argue that it needs refining, but grudgingly they concede that the division between purchaser and provider will be retained. Yet, placating the party requires that there is also talk of how the split must be made compatible with "strategic" health planning, and must be subject to "proper democratic control".

In practice, this means little. The party will say scarcely anything about the issue, and in government will maintain the status quo. Arguing that Labour will abolish the internal market, while keeping the purchaser-provider split, is intellectually contradictory but politically necessary.

A similar phenomenon is evident when it comes to NHS trusts. Labour initially opposed all new trusts as being a way of privatising the NHS. As separate legal entities, they could in theory be sold to the private sector. Here again Labour's rhetoric has been steadily muted as reality has impinged. The U-turn is not so very clear here, but the trend is away from attacking trust status per se and towards attacking the composition of trusts as being part of the "quangocracy". The reality of further restructuring is again beginning to make itself felt. Labour thinking is now directed towards addressing the accountability of trusts, rather than their right to exist.

Fundholding offers another example of the difference between rhetoric and reality. Labour's main concern is the "two-tier system", which gives a head-start to patients whose GP is a fundholder. Two approaches are logically possible: abolition and extension.

Comparing the location of fundholding practices with a map of marginal constituencies which Labour needs to win shows that the party cannot commit itself to abolition. Fundholding is popular with those who benefit, and the party will alienate those people if it commits itself to abolition (the same is true of grant-maintained schools). In practice, there is only one possible approach: some form of extension. Under the guise of abolishing fundholding, a Blair government would instead make all GPs fundholders, by making the concept far more flexible. Those practices that wished to carry on pretty much as now would be able to. Those that did not would be grouped with other practices, with pooled administration. But Labour can't say so, because that would be to concede that the reforms work. Instead, Labour has committed itself to replacing fundholding with "commissioning GPs". Whether this amounts to the abolition or merely a refinement of present policy depends on how you define fundholding.

Backward-looking and out-of-touch as the Labour manifesto will seem on health, Labour's policy in government will actually extend the internal market. Because it is trusted to look after the NHS, Labour can do things that the discredited Tories could find virtually impossible. Labour could achieve further devolution of responsibilities to the trusts, and could justify this as part of its programme of devolving power back to communities. The further into government one looks, the easier it becomes to see Labour taking the reform of healthcare further than the Tories would dare. The author is the director of research at the Social Market Foundation.

Raw Deal?

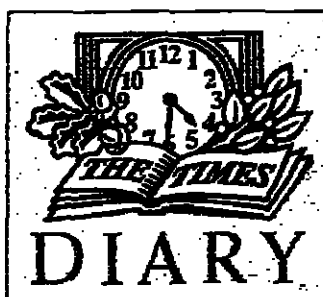
PRINCES, property and pot-throwing residents: it has all the stuff of a Tom Sharpe novel. There is uproar in Kent over the imminent sale by the Ministry of Defence of the Royal Marines School of Music at Deal, where 11 bandmen were killed when a 50lb Semtex bomb exploded in 1999.



Marines on the march

The MoD is on the point of concluding a deal to sell the Georgian barracks to a company called Dukemister. David Shaw, the local MP, is investigating: "I have traced the parenthood of the company to Liechtenstein," he said. "I want the southern barracks preserved for the community, and I don't trust the developers. The MoD is just offloading property." Talk is of retail development, superstores and a road slicing through the south of the Georgian site. Local opposition is growing, with attempts to establish a charitable trust to buy the site and put Dukemister off the scent. Hillier Parker, agents for the sale, refused to comment yesterday, and the MoD said it was not in a position to confirm the deal.

Hopes now rest upon the intervention of the Prince of Wales, who last week launched the Phoenix Trust to take care of redundant institutional buildings. He is said to be taking up the cudgels, following in the footsteps of Noël Coward. "It is a very handsome



Georgian barrack block," said Giles Worsley, editor of the Prince of Wales's architectural magazine *Perspectives*. "It is just the sort of institution that the Phoenix Trust should be concerned about."

● Chesterfield in Derbyshire, the main town in Tony Benn's constituency, has been setting the tone for Tory politics. The Conservative Club in Marsden Street recently sold its premises to make way for Marsden's Bar, a frisky gay club.

Outcast

CLASS boundaries came tumbling down the other day when Arthur Scargill's wife Anne led

protesters against open-cast mining to Chatsworth, the Derbyshire home of the Duke of Devonshire.

Mrs Scargill and her cohorts were protesting against the duke's plan to allow mining on land he owns near Chesterfield. Complaining that it took jobs from deep pit miners as well as ruining the environment, they set up a public address system and broadcast the frightful din of an open-cast operation to bring their protest to the attention of the duke.

His Grace, mindful of the cold, wrapped up and pattered out to



Devonshire in Derbyshire

lute their endeavours. He carried with him a tureen of soup — fine consommé probably, with a dash of sherry — and began belittling. "He was such a gent to everybody that we couldn't get cross with him," said Mrs Scargill. "He was dead straight about why he was mining — he needs the money."

● While the English National Opera dreams of moving to a brand new opera house, a salutary lesson on big projects comes from John Harrison, technical director of the Royal Opera. The prospect of touring London as Covent Garden closes for two years for rebuilding is depressing: "I think morale is down now," he says in the internal magazine, *UpROH*. "I just hope we can get to the end of the season."

Lobby fodder

AFTER Max Clifford's spectacular doing-over of Jerry Hayes, his supposedly more elevated competitors will have their say in Michael Cockerell's new television documentary *A Word in The Right Ear* about political lobbyists, to be shown tomorrow on the BBC.



He has managed to lure Baroness Thatcher's handsomely collared PR man Sir Tim Bell on screen to discuss his art. "I am being told that we go around the place bribing MPs to change policy to suit our clients. All I can tell you is I wish I had that power, because if I did I would have every single client there is and I would be sitting on a mountain in Bermuda at this moment — a mountain of cash at that."

P.H.S



AMERICAN ZERO

Why Blair and Howard are both drawn to US models

From Cannon, Kojak, and Columbo in the 1970s through to *Hill Street Blues* in the 1990s, we have long been used to American detectives dominating our television screens. In recent times, British politicians have imitated their American counterparts in the quest for law and order. The two most unacknowledged but manifestly influential individuals on policy towards crime prevention in this country over the past five years have been the Governor of California and the Mayor of New York, the political leaders of, respectively, the most populous state and city in the United States.

First, Michael Howard at the Home Office took over the policies of mandatory minimum sentences and maximum prison building associated with Pete Wilson, of California. Now, with his forthright interview to *The Big Issue*, Tony Blair, like Jack Straw before him, has endorsed the so-called "zero tolerance" approach to criminality pioneered with impressive results by Rudolph Giuliani of New York. Britain's voters will be choosing between different, but not incompatible, American models of crime prevention when they eventually get their say at the polls.

There is a certain irony in all this. Mr Howard wastes no opportunity to display his Thackeray credentials. Mr Blair may have dumped socialism but will go no further than social democracy. Yet both have ultimately emulated the two leading centrist Republicans America has to offer. This attention is well justified. Many politicians have aimed for the reputation of a tough moderate. Governor Wilson and Mayor Giuliani have managed that rare feat and reaped the accompanying electoral rewards.

There is a subtle difference in the anti-crime strategies adopted on either side of the Atlantic. In California, the emphasis has been placed on reversing the assumption of potential offenders that their

capture would not result in substantial punishment. Governor Wilson, followed by Mr Howard, has set about disabbing that notion through new lengths of imprisonment with minimal opportunity for parole. Mayor Giuliani, like many Labour politicians, believes that criminals are more influenced by the confidence that they will never be caught, not the retribution that they might theoretically suffer. Hence, the stress in New York has been upon convincing urban felons that they will be remorselessly pursued whatever the offence.

Working separately, each philosophy has had substantial success. In the inner cities of California, especially downtown Los Angeles, the police do not have the New York option. They have already allowed the growth of no-go areas where the only zero tolerance is that displayed by well-armed gangs towards the forces of legal authority. In New York, however, the perilous financial standing of the city, which has teetered on the edge of bankruptcy for two decades, precludes the expensive option of long sentences and many more jails.

The two options need not, however, be mutually exclusive. Britain could pursue both imported blueprints at the same time. Unlike the American pioneers, British cities do not suffer from either the no-go or no-cash dilemmas. Politicians from both parties have been interested in both programmes. So far the Conservatives have been more charmed by the California option while Labour has found more promise in New York. The most imaginative strategy would adopt both the macro-strategy of the West Coast with the micro-approach of the East. Whoever successfully blended the two concepts would deserve to capture the prize title of "the law and order party" and the advantage at the ballot box. Rather more relevantly, they might also make a substantial impact on the level of crime.

TIME FOR PAKISTAN

Delaying elections may be better than it appears

Pakistan's military, always a power behind the scenes, has been invited to step to the front of the political stage at a time of turmoil exceptional even by Pakistan's dismal standards. The heads of the armed services will occupy four of the ten seats on a new Council for Defence and National Security. President Pervez Musharraf maintains that its role will be limited to giving "mature advice". Few Pakistanis will believe him.

Whether or not the council actually "advises" the President, when it meets for the first time today, to declare a state of emergency and postpone the parliamentary elections set for February 3, the very act of creating such a body further qualifies Pakistan's frayed claims to be a parliamentary democracy.

Such symbolism matters even if in terms of real power the council could be said merely to make more transparent the power-sharing triad of President, Prime Minister and military chief of staff which is a fact of Pakistan's political life. When he dismissed Benazir Bhutto and her Government last November, President Musharraf was acting well within his constitutional rights. He could also claim to be acting in the country's best interests: the nation's finances were in a terrible state and Miss Bhutto was ever resistant to his demands for a crackdown on the rampant political corruption to which the financial crisis is linked.

His latest move, by contrast, is constitutionally questionable. It could also further destabilise the country if Miss Bhutto, who has undernourishedly stated that her Pakistan People's Party "will not accept the results of the election if we do not win", cites the threat of renewed military dictatorship to justify a return to the politics of mass protest. When the President promised last November to give Pakistan a new political start, he gave no hint of meaning by the

installation of an army-backed presidential system of government.

Whether that is what emerges in practice will be largely up to the military command; and so far, it has shown discernible reluctance to be sucked into the political vortex. In the disputes within the caretaker Cabinet, which has been deeply divided on whether to postpone the February elections, the army has sided with the anti-postponement lobby. A time-limited delay of the February elections would not necessarily be as damaging to Pakistani democracy as it seems. The two leading contenders have both been dismissed from office on corruption charges; three months was always too short a time for credible choices to emerge from such polluted political machinery.

Time would also allow the interim Government to tighten up its accountability law, intended to disqualify politicians guilty of corruption. It was hastily drafted and has allowed too many big fish to slip through its meshes. In particular, there is need to tighten the new rules designed to bar politicians who have damaged the country's banking system by declining to repay massive personal loans to which nothing but their political influence entitled them.

Most of the technocrats filling the political vacuum are doing a respectable job. They have made deep cuts in the size of government, reduced the scope for political patronage, advanced privatisation and introduced deep banking and tax reforms. They have also cancelled most "development" projects, too many of which aimed to buy votes with profligate public works schemes. The telling exception is the monstrously inflated defence budget. Since this alone is reason enough to doubt the military's commitment to true reform, Mr Musharraf has done little to bolster confidence by sweeping the soldiers so publicly into his embrace.

THE BALLOON GOES UP

A salute to the spirit of entrepreneurship and adventure

Almost two decades after man first landed on the Moon, today's adventurers are still trying to circumnavigate the world in a balloon — the mode of transport that pioneered manned flight more than 200 years ago. If the jet stream that yesterday carried Richard Branson and his two intrepid companions aloft across the cloudless Moroccan skies remains as dependable at 30,000ft, the giant Virgin balloon will cross India, the Pacific, America and the Atlantic in about three weeks: our hopes for a safe return to Britain go with it.

Mr Branson's balloon bears only superficial resemblance to the contraptions built by the Montgolfier brothers. The colourful balloon that lifted off from a French provincial marketplace in 1783 was a paper and canvas bag; the air inside was heated by burning straw and wool. It rose 3,000ft and stayed up for ten minutes. Three months later the two pioneers repeated the experiment in Versailles, sending up a sheep, a rooster and a duck as passengers and opening up the age in which the common man could look over the king's palace walls.

The *Virgin Global Challenger* offers no such political symbolism. It weighs over 11 tons and is taller than Nelson's Column. It is filled with helium and guided by navigation and communications equipment packed into a space-age capsule. The risks of this trip,

however, are greater than those of two centuries ago. Balloons are playthings of the elements. Storms and downdrafts can toss and batter them from the skies. Balloons can be pitched into the ocean, crash into mountains or come down in jungles or distant deserts. This balloon can also fly into political turbulence — skirting across wars, straying into closed airspace, or racing into local hostility and suspicion.

Why should Mr Branson risk his life — again — and his fortune on the enterprise? His Virgin empire may reap rich publicity from success; but a disaster for him could spell disaster for his family and employees. It may be said that the balloon is not a uniquely risky vehicle; that the first manned space flights were a fearsome challenge too. But the space missions came at the end of a long and massively financed programme of preparation. Round-the-world solo sailors have been able to draw on thousands of years experience of the world's navies.

This trip is not part of some military training exercise. It is a symbol of private entrepreneurship, amateur sport and personal courage. There is a sort of race too, not a precise modern race but a mildly confusing old-fashioned contest in which a Belgian team in Switzerland and an American in St Louis vie for an immaterial prize. The Montgolfiers would have approved.

Scenario for the bugging of a home

From Mr Harold Pinter

Sir, I write with reference to the Police Bill, now passing through Parliament with no discernible opposition from Her Majesty's Opposition. Since the Bill will legalise "bugging" of private property by the police I take it the following sequence of events is logical.

A householder discovers a police officer bugging his house. He (or she) asks the officer to remove himself and the bug. The officer refuses, arguing that his activity is entirely legal. The householder persists, arguing in turn that what is taking place is an invasion of age-old rights of privacy. The officer cautions the householder. The householder refuses to give way. He is then placed under arrest for obstructing a police officer in the course of his duty.

Would the Home Secretary confirm or deny this scenario?

Yours faithfully,
HAROLD PINTER,
c/o Judy Dais Associates,
2 St Charles Place, W10.
January 6.

Abortion and politics

From the Reverend Timothy Russ

Sir, Dr Geoffrey Seiff, a prospective parliamentary candidate, would like Cardinal Hume to give advice about voting on the whole range of issues, from the National Lottery to crime and punishment (letter, January 6). He thinks this because the Cardinal has spoken against voting for candidates who support abortion.

If the Cardinal were to follow Dr Seiff's advice, the consequence would be to make the Church into a political party and to confuse the issue on one point with an apparent omniscience which would in fact be folly.

In the "back to basics" movement it is a step forward to identify a genuine basic, and the right to life is obviously the most basic human right. Should we not, in our proneness to muddle and compromise, be grateful to the Cardinal for clarifying this point, especially as, since we have an unwritten constitution, the welfare of the country depends not only on the good will but on the sound moral sense of its leaders.

Sincerely,
TIMOTHY RUSS,
The Presbytery, 23 High Street,
Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire.
January 6.

From the Assistant for Public Affairs to Cardinal Hume

Sir, Dr Seiff says that "the Cardinal cannot be allowed to shy away from telling us where he stands on the secular aspects of the nation's governance".

May I refer him to *The Common Good*, published last October by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, of which Cardinal Hume is president. This document sets out the principles of Catholic social teaching and its application to many key areas of public policy, including the foundational issue of the right to life.

The bishops insist that every public policy should be judged by the effect it has on human dignity and the common good. In saying this they do not seek to tell people who to vote for, but rather to make more explicit the inescapable moral dimension of all political activity, including voting.

Yours faithfully,
CHARLES WOOKEY,
Assistant for Public Affairs
to Cardinal Hume,
Archbishop's House, Westminster.

Private healthcare

From Dr Stuart Sanders

Sir, I practise as a private family doctor and I have noticed recently a tendency for private patients to be discharged from hospital as quickly as possible — in some cases so prematurely as not only to cause the patients discomfort but also, and more importantly, to put them at risk should they develop post-operative complications.

This concept has been introduced by several of the United Kingdom healthcare insurers in order to contain treatment costs. The consultant in charge of the case is obliged to follow this practice to avoid criticism by the healthcare insurer; should he not comply, he would be asked to submit a long and tedious report to the insurer explaining why the patient should stay in hospital longer than prescribed by the insurer.

I ask if this healthcare trend is in the interest of the patient or has it been created with the insurers' commercial considerations in mind?

Yours faithfully,
STUART SANDERS,
22 Harrow House,
20 Harley Street, W1.

Predictable Parris

From Mrs Nicholas Banks

Sir, Matthew Parris's predictable and inevitable articles (letter, January 2) — on his holidays or anything else — are the reason I predictably and inevitably buy *The Times*.

Yours faithfully,
SHERI BANKS,
Ty Uchaf, Llan, Cilcain,
Mold, Flintshire, North Wales.
January 2.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

New 'onslaught' on hereditary peers

From the Earl of Dudley

Sir, I personally hope that Mr Jack Straw's stir against the hereditary peerage in the House of Lords (report, December 31) will be as unsuccessful as that of his historic namesake, one of the leaders of the Peasants' Revolt in 1381.

Labour's denunciation of individual peers is reminiscent of the posters pasted on Chinese walls by Chairman Mao's Red Guard; and as deplorable. My concern for the constitutional role of the hereditary peerage will remain for debate in the Lords, should the occasion unhopefully arise.

Yours faithfully,
DUDLEY,
Venton House,
Putsborough, North Devon.
January 1.

From Mr Richard A. Edwards

Sir, To judge from the quality of debate to date, the composition of the Upper House, its powers and its relation to the Commons are important matters that clearly cannot be settled by the normal political process. As with the previous attempt to reform the Lords in 1968, a cross-party consensus is needed.

An effective way of arriving at such a consensus would be a special select committee drawn from members of both Houses. Such a committee might receive submissions from experts outside Parliament, investigate the various proposals for reform and, of

course, make recommendations on how the Lords should be reformed.

This, surely, would be a more profitable manner in which to pursue this important issue.

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD A. EDWARDS,
60 Queen's Road, Devizes, Wiltshire.

From the Earl of Darnley

Sir, I was interested to read about my family history in your report on the latest attack on the House of Lords by the Labour Party. For the record the facts are these.

My grandfather was not the first Earl and even if he was he could hardly have been raised to the peerage in 1640. The family title dates back to 1725 in the peerage of Ireland, which does not entitle the holder to sit in the House of Lords, and whatever lands the family used to own in Ireland came into the family through marriage in the mid-18th century.

My grandfather was better known as The Hon. Ivo Bligh, captain of the England cricket team responsible for the original "Ashes". He later was elected as a Representative Peer for Ireland and sat as such in the House of Lords. I hope you will agree that the inclusion of my name in this political onslaught is somewhat misplaced.

Yours faithfully,
DARNLEY,
Netherwood Manor,
Tenbury Wells, Worcestershire.
January 1.

Oxbridge entry

From Dr Stephen Monsell

Sir, Your report, "Oxbridge alumni hope gifts will secure places for children" (January 2), may have given the impression that this college was considering giving serious weight to admissions decisions to a family link to the college.

The informal minute from which you quoted in fact recorded the discussion and decisive rejection of a suggestion that interviewers should be told of a candidate's family connection when it is known to our development office. We would like our admissions decisions to be completely blind to any such connection.

In practice we often are not blind: a candidate mentions a family link, or we remember their father or sister as a student. We surely cannot disprove of a candidate's wish to maintain a family tradition as one motive for their choice of college — that is the "existing and informal bias" I acknowledge; it is more sentimental than financial. But, as the minute

Official Solicitor's role

From Mr Francis Bennion

Sir, There is a misconception at the root of the recent controversy over the proposed film of Frederick West's life (letter, January 4). It is assumed that, in relation to his rights over the West archive, the Official Solicitor is obliged under the present law covering his duties (report, January 2) to maximise profits for the beneficiaries in the same way as would apply to an ordinary trustee. In fact this is not so.

The full title of this officer, as successor to the former Official Solicitor of the Court of Chancery, is "Official Solicitor to the Supreme Court of Judicature". He is an officer of that court and is by law obliged to exhibit the loftiest standards of behaviour in the performance of his office.

This was laid down by Lord Bridge of Harwich in *R v Tower Hamlets London Borough Council, ex parte Chemik Developments Ltd* [1988] AC 888 at 876-877. Lord Bridge said that the court would only allow its officers to act in a "high-principled" way, adding that even where an ordinary person might lawfully act in a "shabby" way, this would not be permitted in an officer of the court.

It seems clear to me that the Official Solicitor is entitled, indeed bound, to

exercise his duties in the way a high-minded private person would act where he had a choice as to the way he was to deploy his rights of property.

Yours faithfully,
FRANCIS BENNION,
5 Old Nursery View,
Kennington, Oxford.
January 4.

From Mr W. T. N. Chidgey

Sir, Mr G. L. Leigh (letter, January 4) was clearly fortunate in his beneficiaries when a trustee.

I was employed in a bank's trustee department and I recall a case many years ago when we accepted an offer on a house subject to contract. Before contract we received a higher offer but felt that we were morally committed to the previous acceptance. The beneficiary sued and the court held that a trustee had no moral obligation to a third party that could override the legal obligation to maximise the benefit to his trust. We had to pay.

The Official Solicitor was surely in the same position.

Yours faithfully,
W. T. N. CHIDGEY,
White Rose House,
31a Deanfield Avenue,
Henley on Thames, Oxfordshire.
January 4.

Labour and education

From the Headmaster of The King's School, Chester

Sir, In a radio interview last Sunday, Mr David Blunkett, the Shadow Education Secretary, welcomed the intention of Mr and Mrs Blair to send their second son to a grant-maintained school. He did so partly on the ground that it is good for parents to have the opportunity to send brothers and sisters to the same school (see also reports, January 7).

This independent school, doubtless like a number of others, has boys whose younger brothers would very much like to join them here in due course. They will only be able to do so if, like their older brothers, they can benefit from the Government's assisted places scheme.

Mr Blunkett has now confirmed that no new assisted places will be awarded if Labour wins the next election (report, January 7). Can he not at least guarantee that some will continue, so as to ensure that younger brothers and sisters, and their parents, can have the freedom enjoyed by the Blair family to choose the school of their wishes and ambitions.

Yours faithfully,
A. R. D. WICKSON,
Headmaster,
The King's School, Chester.
January 7.

From the Shadow Secretary of State for Education and Employment

Sir, Contrary to the suggestion in your report ("Blunkett would scrap results of first tests", January 2), Labour has made no decision on the future of national performance tables for primary schools. We will not do so until we are in a position to judge the efficiency and usefulness to parents of the exercise, to be published on March 1.

If at that stage we judged the national tables not to be an efficient way of providing parents with information on local primary schools, we would ensure that details of test results in local schools were published by local education authorities — and would thus be available to parents. We are committed to extending the information published by including an assessment of how well pupils in a school are performing compared to their baseline assessment on entry to primary school.

Yours sincerely,
DAVID BLUNKETT,
House of Commons.
January 2.

Letters for publication should carry contact telephone numbers. We regret that we cannot accept letters by telephone but they may be sent by fax to 0171-782 5046.

Earliest record of America's name

From Dr Felipe Fernandez-Armesto, FSA

Sir, The earliest evidence about the derivation of the name "America" (Sir James Craig's letter, January 4) was recorded by the man who, as far as we know, bestowed it: Martin Waldseemüller, cosmographer of the school of Saint-Dié in Lorraine. In a work of 1507, he referred to "the fourth part of the world, which, because Americus [Amerigo Vesputti] found it, may be called Amerige, that is, Land of Americus, or America". It was typical of the learned games then played at Saint-Dié that the suffix "-ge" should be used for the Greek *genos* or "tribe".

Alluding to writings by Vesputius appended to his work, Waldseemüller further explained: "The fourth part has been found by Americus Vesputius, as will be heard in what follows: I do not see why anyone could properly disallow that it be called Amerige, that is, Land of Americus, or America, after Americus, the discoverer, a man of sagacious spirit." The feminine ending was to be preferred "since", Waldseemüller continued, "the names of both Europe and Asia have been allotted after women".

Vesputius's claim to the discovery was unjustified; but all 16th-century works known to me which discuss the origin of the name of America endorse Waldseemüller's derivation. The similarity with the name of the Bristolian mentioned in Sir James's letter, Richard Ameryk, who died in 1504, is an amusing but otherwise unremarkable coincidence and there is no evidence to support the presumption that the hemisphere was named in his honour.

Nor can Ameryk be said to have been an investor in Cabot's enterprise, though he was one of the customs officials responsible for funds from which Cabot's crown pension was paid.

Yours faithfully,
FELIPE FERNANDEZ-ARMESTO,
Hakluyt Society,
c/o Map Library, The British Library,
Great Russell Street, WC1.
January 4.

New year resolution

From Mr Bill Kearns

Sir, There may have been many truths in the articles you have published over the past year, but none more than William Rees-Mogg reporting the comments of the Archbishop of Canterbury ("Defenders of the faith", December 30). Dr Carey was reported as saying:

When I actually meet politicians, the Government, the Royal Family, members of the House of Lords and so on, they are remarkably ordinary people. When you get close to them they are the same as my aunt Ethel.

Perhaps in the new year we will all treat them as such. With affection, equality and a lot less deference.

Yours,
BILL KEARNS,
11 Court Royal Mews,
Northlands Road,
Southampton, Hampshire.
December 30.

Christmas rations

From Dr Richard Hardwick

Sir, When I was a junior doctor in the 1950s we always spent some of Christmas Day on the wards, carving turkey, serving port (depending on rank) followed by our own Christmas fare.

My son, now a registrar, drew the short straw and was part of a very reduced staff on 24-hour duty both for the Christmas and new year holidays. It was deemed too expensive to maintain canteen staff (paid double) to feed young doctors (not paid double) and sandwiches were left out.

Even the homeless were offered a hot meal on Christmas Day. Surely good medicine comes more easily from happy doctors.

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD HARDWICK,
Passfield Corner,
Passfield, Liphook, Hampshire.

Tip for the icebound

From Mrs Marjorie Robertson Smith

Sir, I should like to add to Dr Stuttaford's plea for people to wrap up warmly (Medical Briefing, December 31). Woollen cuffs can be knitted or cut from old socks or jerseys and worn on the wrists next to the skin. I wear cuffs all the time in the winter and never suffer from cold hands.

Yours sincerely,
M. ROBERTSON SMITH,
1 Bishop's Wood, Cuddesdon, Oxford.

Pie in the sky?

From Dr David Cowen

Sir, In yesterday's report on Richard Branson's global balloon trip you described the balloon as "the size of the Empire State Building". I viewed this with some scepticism. Today you depict it as being somewhat higher than Nelson's Column. This I find more believable.

The British have always tended to exaggeration, and the expedition is certainly huge. I wish the team every success.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID COWEN,
Flat 2, 14 Granville Road,
Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne.
January 7.

Ignore the horror stories. With firm house rules and carefully chosen tenants, says Amanda Foreman, letting makes sound sense

Never let your friend be your lodger

Lodgers have a bad image in popular culture. On screen, their roles tend to occupy a limited range between social psychopaths and dangerous psychopaths. Like successful career women (*Fatal Attraction*), nannies (*The Hand that Rocks the Cradle*) and television repair men (*The Cable Guy*), Hollywood generally regards such people as a threat to the American household.

But don't believe the hype. I have been letting my two spare bedrooms since 1991 and the experience has been nothing but lucrative.

The Government helps me to maintain my positive attitude by offering generous tax incentives to landlords. Under the rent-a-room scheme, from next April up to £4,250 a year is tax-free — which works out at about £81 a week. Outside London, where the average rent is £55 a week, some landlords may pay no tax at all. Rents are much higher in the capital, averaging £90 to £100 a week, which means that landlords still have to pay tax on only part of the profits.

Alternatively, if you have more than one lodger, as I do, it can be advantageous to ignore the scheme and instead claim tax relief against expenses. I include everything in my list of deductions, from washing-up liquid to light bulbs.

The large amount of money involved is the reason I do not let to friends. Lodgers are essentially

cash cows, to be handled firmly yet pleasantly with a view to maximising profits. You cannot turn your friends into a business and expect to maintain the same relationship. When lodgers a) default on the rent, b) break the washing machine, or c) hog the telephone all night, the rules for dealing with the situation are simple. In the case of a) give them a month's notice, b) deduct the cost from their deposit, and c) tell them to get off the telephone. But you cannot throw your friend on to the street when she has lost her job, even if it means her living with you rent-free for the next nine months.

My prejudice against letting to friends is confirmed by some of the nightmare stories I have heard from people who do. The biggest problem is the fact that proximity often breeds jealousy. It is not unusual for one flatmate to feel that the other is "taking over" his or her friends, particularly as people tend to regard flatmates who are friends as a double act.

Edward Vaisy, a 29-year-old political lobbyist, shares a flat with his best friend, which he enjoys, except that "Mutual friends ring up and feel obliged to make conversation with you for five minutes, even though they actually want to talk to the other person.



Amanda Foreman: "The Government offers tax incentives to landlords — £51 a week from April"

Also annoying is the weekly competition to see who gets asked out more. Then there's the issue of how you socialise at home without your flatmate automatically joining in. Ironically, the distance inherent

in the landlord-lodger relationship guarantees everyone a far greater sense of privacy. We all do our own thing in my house; occasionally, we watch television together or share a takeaway, but our lives are

separate. The fact that everyone's background is different brings unexpected benefits, too. I had a travel agent once who was good for cheap flights, a champagne salesman (useful for parties), a bank

manager (sound pension advice) and a professional sailor who enjoyed DIY.

Last year my house embodied a successful version of the Northern Ireland peace talks. There was Claire the banker, a Roman Catholic from Cork, Robert the engineer, a Protestant from Belfast, and myself, an Anglo-American, all living in civilised harmony — we just never mentioned the word unification.

After five years in the business, I have learnt that the rules are few but indispensable:

● The room must be presentable, include a drawer and cupboard space and have a double bed — no one will accept a single bed nowadays.

● Do not take someone on the first interview — always meet them a second time before deciding.

● Ask direct questions about their previous house (there may be good reasons why this person is looking for a new place).

● Be explicit about the house rules at the first meeting, ie, this is a non-smoking house, you must write down all telephone messages, you may not give parties.

● Do not allow the new lodger to move in without writing you a cheque for the first month's rent and a month's deposit.

● Have the rent paid by standing order and agree on a six-month contract, with a let-out clause on both sides of a month's notice.

Using an agency dulls the pain of looking. Probably the best in London are Flatmates, which has been around for 25 years, and The Flatshare Directory, which started last year.

Flatmates, run by Molly Berwick, takes a psychological approach and insists on interviewing all its clients, both tenants and landlords. It acts almost like a dating agency and tries to put people together who will become friends. The Flatshare Directory places its emphasis on the quality of the property. James Baker personally inspects every flat or house, but he does not meet potential tenants. "Most of them are too busy to come down to the office during working hours," he explains.

Both agencies charge a flat fee of a week-and-a-half's rent, although The Flatshare Directory only levies this charge against tenants, on the basis that without the landlords, the company would not exist.

Of course there is no guarantee that your lodger will not become attracted to Satanism. Maybe one day I will end up like Meg Ryan in *Pacific Heights* and have to shoot my lodger dead. But in the meantime, I'm quite happy to take the money and run.



A view of Bocket Hall across the golf course from the estate's Paine Bridge: CCA, the new owners, plan a second 18-hole golf course plus a health spa with gymnasium and pool

Brocket Hall tees off to a new revival

As the former lord of the manor sits in jail, Rachel Kelly looks at the grandiose plans for an historic stately home

The three children of Lord Bocket are likely to inherit a very different home from that enjoyed by their parents. The jailed peer's heirs, Alexander, 12, William, five, and Anthony, eight, will recover Bocket Hall in 60 years' time, thanks to its leasehold sale last month. Meanwhile, the house is to be transformed by its new owner, CCA, a Hong Kong-based developer-manager of 28 private city, golf and country clubs.

CCA has revealed plans to re-launch the house as a hotel and conference centre to rival Cheltenham, near Cookham, Berkshire, former home of the Astor family.

The company plans to build a second 18-hole golf course on the 534-acre estate, outside Welwyn in Hertfordshire, a health spa, with a gymnasium and pool, and to restore extensively the existing Grade I listed house, now used as a conference centre.

Children, builders and decorators are already at work. Nigel Massey, a spokesman, talks of "awakening the slumbering beauty that is Bocket" from the neglect that took place during the 18 months of

Gilders, builders and decorators are already at work

negotiation for the property's sale. The house's restoration and eventual return to the Bocket children is some consolation to Lord Bocket, who is in Ford open prison in West Sussex completing a five-year sentence for a £4.5 million insurance fraud. "At least in this way my children will eventually be able to go home," he said.

CCA is believed to have paid £9 million for the 60-year lease. The new hotel-conference centre would have an estimated 60 bedrooms, compared with the present 46 bedrooms and suites. A big-name chef is also to be hired.

Michael Longshaw, the house's new general manager, who is already at Bocket, says: "We are doing some rapid restoration in the main house. Some of the interiors have been allowed to become a bit tired during the past two years."

CCA's plans are still subject to planning consent from Hertfordshire County Council. No location has been chosen for the new golf course or the spa, but the spa would be built to mirror the architecture of the main building.

Mr Massey says: "Large houses such as Bocket were built not only for the family but to provide adequate facilities for meetings where various aspects of the family's business interests could be discussed. It is therefore wholly

appropriate that Bocket Hall should again be used for the purpose for which it was designed."

CCA's plans are the latest chapter in the colourful history of the house, built in 1760. Lord Melbourne, Queen Victoria's first

Prime Minister, lived there with Lady Caroline Lamb, his deranged wife. The one-time lover of Byron, she had attracted notoriety by emerging naked from a soup tureen. In 1865 Lord Palmerston, another Prime Minister, was found

dead on the billiard table after an entanglement with a maid.

CCA is owned by its founder, Dieter Klostmann. The company's clubs, mainly in the Asia Pacific region, have 80,000 members and include the London Capital Club and the Vietnam Golf & Country Club. Golf club members will be allowed to transfer their membership to the new club at no extra cost. CCA is considering special concessions for members' access to the main house.

The present Lord Bocket saved the house from disrepair by converting it in 1981 into a profitable "residential meeting place" and golf club, with an international standard 18-hole championship golf course. But his speculation in the classic car market cost him £20 million and left him with big debts.

So Lord Bocket planned a £4.5 million insurance fraud that would save him from ruin. In 1991, he broke up and hid the parts of three Ferraris and a Maserati, which he reported stolen and for which he claimed insurance.

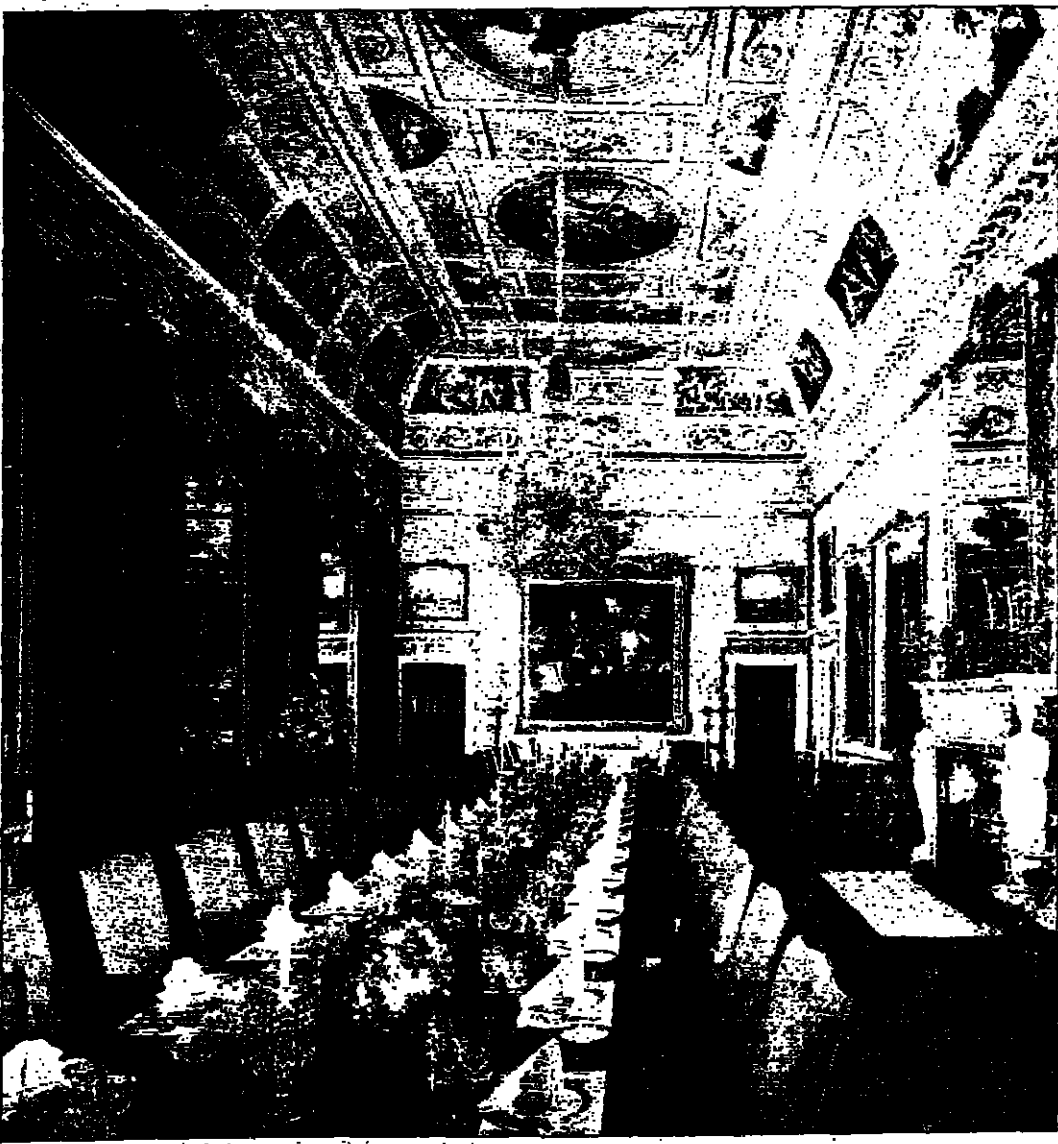
In 1994 Lady Bocket, a former Vogue model, exposed her husband's dealings. She is now living

A spokesman talks of 'awakening the slumbering beauty'

in her homeland of Puerto Rico with their three children. For the past 18 months, the house and golf club were owned and run by Bocket Hall Ltd, the surrounding estate was owned by a family trust. Both parties had to agree to the sale before it could go ahead.

Midland Bank demanded that Bocket Hall be sold to pay off an £18 million debt that had accrued and it went on the market 18 months ago for £15 million for a 125-year lease. Other bidders included the property developer Elliot Berner, whose company owns Wentworth Golf Club, and David Sullivan, the publisher of the *Sunday Sport*, but reports of a £30 million offer for the freehold from the Brunel Royal Family were denied. Other potential investors had flatly rejected the idea of spending millions on the property for it to return to the Bocket family in the future.

CCA wants to restore more historic houses and it is looking at other important houses in southern England. None, though, is likely to be as intriguing as Bocket.



The banquet room in which Lady Caroline Lamb had herself served up naked in a soup tureen

The tax breaks that help the new landowner

Amanda Loose reports on the boom in the large country estates market

The market for large country estates and their houses, so long mired in recession, is booming. Estates are selling for well over the asking price, and 40 per cent of estates sold by Knight Frank last year were snapped up even before reaching the open market.

Agents predict further price increases this year, because of the latest round of City bonuses, continuing tax breaks available for new owners, booming land values, and the chance of large European Union subsidies in the form of common agricultural policy (CAP) grants.

The large estates market was sluggish until 1994. Willie Gething of Property Vision, says: "In the early 1990s, Grade II land was selling for about £1,000 an acre. The value of agricultural land has now tripled to £3,000 an acre, in some instances."

James Laing, of the land agency Strutt & Parker, says: "Agricultural profits have boomed because of consistently good harvests and high crop yields, coupled with low interest rates and low inflation. Land values in the Home Counties have risen by up to 30 per cent on a year ago because of greater profits to be had from agriculture. These have increased since our exit from the exchange-rate mechanism, as the levels of subsidies have increased after the pound devalued."

Four of Britain's wealthiest landowners received £1 million each in CAP grants last year and 10 others were given between £500,000 and £990,000, according to government figures released last week.

More than 1,000 farmers received £100,000 and a further 1,234 subsidies of between £100,000 and £1 million. The subsidies include set-aside grants which give farmers £338 for each hectare of land left fallow.

Tax breaks are an incentive. Businesses can postpone their tax liability on the sale of their company by claiming reinvestment tax relief if they reinvest the proceeds, Mr Laing says. "In addition, if you farm land yourself for two years before you die, you are eligible for 100 per cent inheritance-tax relief," he says. "Many buyers fear that such tax reliefs could change if Labour comes to power, so they are taking advantage of them while they can."

Strutt & Parker estimates that

building-land prices also increased by more than 10 per cent last year, which has generated an increase in buyers looking for development land. Mr Laing adds: "As the housing market recovers, more landowners are selling small corners of their estates as building land. If someone reinvests the profits made from a trading asset in land within three years, then they qualify for rollover tax relief, which postpones paying capital gains tax."

Many of the new buyers last year were entrepreneurs whose companies had merged or been acquired, according to Mr Gething. More than 40 per cent of purchases were made by City or business buyers, says James Crawford from Knight Frank, while 39 per cent of estates went to overseas buyers, attracted by low land premiums.

Most estates are going for above the asking price. Mr Crawford says. Premiums of up to 20 per cent above guide prices were achieved last year, and Justin Marking, of Savills, estimates that people have paid premiums of up to 40 per cent.

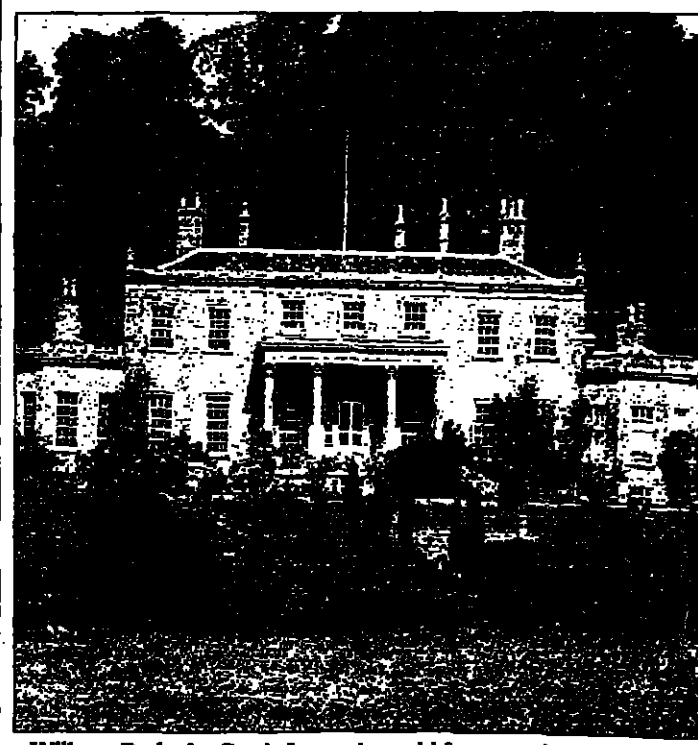
Large estate and country house sales in 1996 were fast and furious. One of the fastest-selling estates of the year was West Ashling House, near Chichester, West Sussex. The former home of Viscount Portal, designed by Robert Lutyens (son of Sir Edwin), was sold in just four days by Humberts for well above the £1 million guide price.

Wilbury Park, the Grade I listed Palladian mansion near Salisbury in Wiltshire, was bought for more than £8 million, £3 million over its guide price, by Miranda Countess of Iveagh, of the Guinness family.

One of the biggest private sales of the year was Foxcote Estate in Ilmington, Warwickshire. The 900-acre estate, with its Georgian house, went for about £8 million.

The Hurdett Estate, between Salisbury and Shaftesbury, owned by the property developer John Beckwith, was one of the year's family stories. It went for more than £10 million in a private sale — £2.5 million above the traditional valuation.

Current sales include that of the 1,435-acre Beckering Park Estate, near Flitwick, Bedfordshire, by Savills, with a guide price of £4.25 million.



Wilbury Park: the Grade I mansion sold for more than £8 million

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NEWS

Election choice is 'smiles or tears'

John Major staked out the ground for a presidential-style general election campaign, accusing Tony Blair of hypocrisy and inviting voters to choose between "smiles and tears".

He reacted furiously to Mr Blair's attitude to beggars and minor criminals, saying the Labour leader had accused him of being petty and vindictive when he promised action on the issues two years ago. Pages 1, 2

Branson floats off on record attempt

Richard Branson's attempt to be the first man to fly a balloon non-stop around the world was launched as his towering 200ft helium balloon rose against the snow-capped Atlas mountains. The *Virgin Challenger* took off at 11.18am with Mr Branson, 46, Per Lindstrand, 46, and their 11th-hour substitute co-pilot, Alex Ritchie, on board. Pages 1, 3

Hope for yachtsman

Rescuers are increasingly confident that the British solo yachtsman Tony Bullimore, who is missing in the Southern Ocean, is alive and awaiting rescue after the capsizing of his boat. Page 1

Gingrich victory

Newt Gingrich won his battle to remain Speaker of the House of Representatives, the first Republican to be re-elected to this powerful post in 83 years. Pages 1, 10

Rich pickings

A Harrods customer was so rich he never noticed credit card criminals had plundered his Gold Mastercard account to the tune of £120,000 a court heard. Page 3

Blair's contribution

Tony Blair may never put his hand in his pocket for them but the vagrants of King's Cross had ample reason yesterday to thank the Labour leader for a nice little earner. Page 4

Ronnie Scott funeral

The turnout at the funeral of Ronnie Scott would have done justice to a Saturday night at the Soho club which he founded and which put London on the jazz map of the world. Page 5

Teachers' boycott

Head teachers threatened to boycott school training for 20,000 student teachers unless the Government backed down over early retirement. Page 6

Juppé flies into a menu row

Alain Juppé, the French Prime Minister, has flown into another damaging row by admitting to a taste for ortolan bunting, the songbird beloved by gourmands but technically protected under French law. He told *Elle*: "The funny thing about ortolans is that it is forbidden to hunt or sell them but, in the best places, you can still find them". Page 11

Stalking fear

A bank official claimed yesterday she had been stalked for 14 years by a man she turned down for a car loan. Page 6

Film find

Eighteen minutes of previously unseen film starring Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall, which the director Howard Hawks cut from *The Big Sleep*, have been discovered. Page 7

Gun re-enactment

Noam Friedman, the 22-year-old Israeli soldier who tried to kill "as many Arabs as possible" in Hebron, returned to the marketplace to re-enact his actions for police investigators. Page 8

Mercenary army

Hundreds of mercenaries, including several Britons, are massing in eastern Zaire to mount a counter-offensive against Rwandan-backed rebels. Page 9

Flooding crisis

Flooding in California which came after a series of downpours that began on Boxing Day, has been described by as the most destructive in the state's history. Page 10

Spymaster's anger

Markus Wolf, the former Communist spy master, rejected charges of kidnapping Cold War agents and launched a blistering attack on the German authorities. Page 11



Hundreds of the victims of the big freeze gather around a volunteer with a bucket of food at Abbotsbury swannery, Dorset, yesterday

BUSINESS

Forecast: The Treasury is to consider contracting out the forecasting of key economic statistics and the monitoring of public finances to an independent company. Page 25

Lottery: Bookmakers have defeated an attempt by Camelot, the operator of the National Lottery, to stifle the launch of '49s', a rival lottery. Page 25

Lloyds TSB: The £1.6 billion loan book of Mortgage Express, a home loans division of Lloyds TSB, is understood to be up for sale. Page 25

Markets: The FT-SE 100 index fell 27.7 points to close at 4078.8. Sterling's trade-weighted index rose from 95.7 to 96.1 after a rise from \$1.6844 to \$1.6955 and from DM2.6369 to DM2.6485. Page 28

SPORT

Football: The troubles of Nottingham Forest, who are nineteenth in the Premiership, deepened when Alan Hill, the general manager, ended his 25-year association with the club. Page 44

Cricket: Michael Atherton, the England captain, suffered further embarrassment in a benefit match in Auckland, when he was caught in the deep by the only woman playing. Page 44

Rugby union: Scott Gibbs will lead Wales for the first time against the United States in Cardiff on Saturday, taking over from the suspended Jonathan Humphreys. Page 45

Tennis: Tim Henman progressed to the second round of the Sydney International tournament with victory over Renzo Furlan. Page 45

ARTS

Spring blooms: From Felicity Kendal at the Old Vic and Val Kilmer in *The Saint* to Brage at the Royal Academy and Cliff Richard's *Heathcliff* in London: the top spring shows. Page 33

Art float: A cruise ship, the *Galaxy*, is on her maiden voyage in the Caribbean with an unusual interior or decor - 450 works of contemporary art worth £2 million. Page 34

Early talent: Sparkling young musicians appear in the second part of concerts for this year's Park Lane Group Young Artists series at the Purcell Room. Page 34

Folk heroines: Nigel Williamson finds out how Norma Waterson, the 57-year-old folk singer who beat Oasis, is coping with her unexpected fame. Page 35

FEATURES

Up and away: Richard Branson can now claim the title "Britain's last great adventurer". Page 15

Balancing act: Optimum nutritionists insist we can eat our way to tip-top health. Page 12

Tuck in: Eating bread, potatoes and pasta keeps weight off better than a fixed-calorie diet. Page 13

Nigella Lawson: "We all have our own version of pornography. Mine is the outpourings of the diet industry". Page 13

Solid underpinning: What women really cannot resist is a stout pair of drawers. Page 14

Changing fortunes: Brompton Hall is to become an hotel and conference centre to rival Clivedon. Page 21

Reflection: A quest for more readers has led Britain's only Labour tabloid to relaunch. Page 23

High salaries, guaranteed jobs, national production at half mast, lowered productivity: the tiger of South Korea is getting old and its teeth are starting to lose their edge. Page 17

TV LISTINGS

Preview: After going bust in the 1980s Sir Freddie Laker is trying a comeback. *Trouble at the Top* (BBC2, 9.50pm). Review: Matthew Bond on boring travel. Page 47

OPINION

American zero

The two most unacknowledged but influential individuals on policy towards crime prevention in this country have been the Governor of California and the Mayor of New York. Page 17

Time for Pakistan

When the President promised last November to give Pakistan a new political start, he gave no hint of meaning by it the installation of an army-backed presidential system of government. Page 17

The balloon goes up

Almost two decades after man landed on the moon, adventurers are still trying to circumnavigate the world in a balloon. Page 17

COLUMNS

SIMON JENKINS

Voters, as they become more prosperous, more leisured and less deferential, will seek new forms of expression. They will want direct participation between elections. They will want more intimate local control of the public sector. They will seek a closer link to elected representatives, and a more sceptical link to government. Page 16

ALAN COREN

Flying to Nice on New Year's Eve was the best of times; flying back to London three days later was the worst. For December 31, 1996 was the end of an era. Page 16

SIMON BARNES

Luck is a dodgy concept in any walk of life. How pleasant it is to blame some nebulous third party for one's own failings. Sport is full of refutations of the entire notion. You make your own luck, people say, and so you do. Page 46

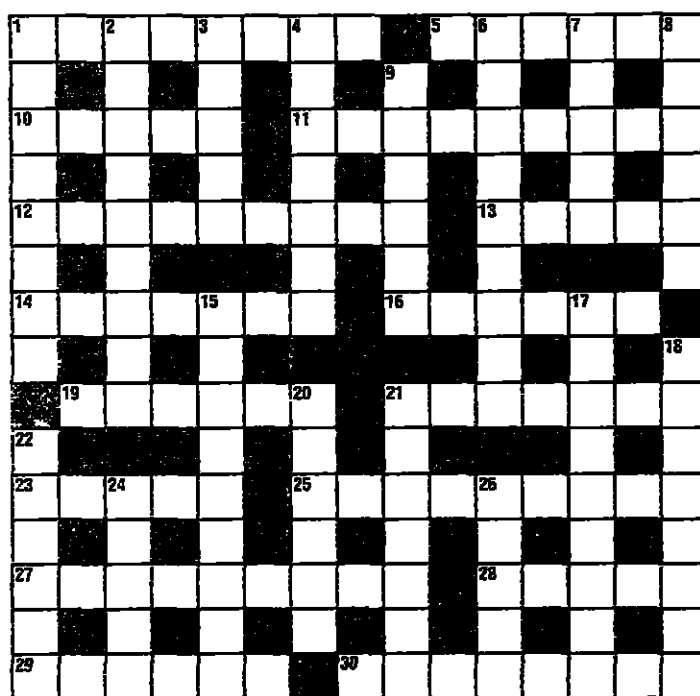
OBITUARIES

Lord Mayhew, former Labour MP and minister; Desmond Flower, publisher; Heinz Blandford, industrial chemist. Page 19

LETTERS

Harold Pinter on legalising the bugging of homes; hereditary peers reply to Labour; man who named America; Branson balloon; abortion; politics and the Church; Labour and education. Page 17

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,371



- ACROSS
- Pheasant, for instance - or rook? (4,4).
 - Stolen by crook in fast car (3,3).
 - Reminder, say, to press for cash back (5).
 - On deck, bore punishment in force (4,3).
 - Ten-party hust has to walk, then run (5,4).
 - Savings scheme's return is valuable item (5).
 - Obstacle on tour for musical group (7).
 - Job unlikely to be found at the end of this line? (6).
 - Constitutional revolution on the way (6).
 - Charge for carriage of mature wine up front (7).
 - A doctor needs it in operating room (5).
 - Boast freely about return to ocean in this vessel? (9).
- DOWN
- Tradesman familiar with the works of Browning? (8).
 - Most able to accept rise of trendy revolutionary type? (9).
 - Leaves producer in the Strand, say (5).
 - Few covering mountain-climbing and return to the ground (7).
 - Manages to grab one in wreckage (5).
 - With less concentration, produce a solution (6).
 - Stress could be grave (6).
 - Circus performer in Rome - Latin version (4,5).
 - Possibly able to speak in detail (9).
 - If it's fine, one doesn't have to go inside (8).
 - Teaching requiring not so much working (6).
 - Check before opening? (7).
 - Mother, perhaps, and father separated (6).
 - One directs players to remain at the wicket (5).
 - A bit of information from workers in current stoppage (5).

Solution to Puzzle No 20,370

MULTIPLY JAUNTY
N R O E E E
O A T V O N S C R E W S
A I M T N D T
A G A N I P P E B A R F I E
E B T V O U R
T E A L R E D O U B L E D
S N B R K E A
O B I D I E N C E H A R D
A C C O U N T I O N
A D A G I O N E G A T I V E
T U M T R I E
I L L U M I N E E F F O R T
O E N L S U T
N U T M E G L I S T L E S S

Times Two Crossword, page 48

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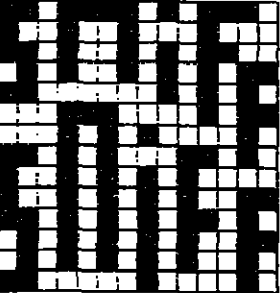
Motorway
Europe Country by Country 0326 401 885
European Fuel costs 0326 401 886
French Motorways 0326 401 887
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HOURS OF DARKNESS

Sun rises: 5.47 am Sun sets: 4.11 pm
Moon rises: 3.57 pm Moon sets: 6.52 am
New moon: 12.12 pm
Full moon: 12.12 pm
First quarter: 12.12 pm
Last quarter: 12.12 pm

NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING
Recycled paper made up
41.2% of the raw material for
UK newspapers in the first
half of 1996



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Fast Working

THE UNBLOCKER
Clenbuterol
Fast Working

FORECAST

General: England and Wales will have another cold day with a frosty start. It will remain dull with large amounts of cloud and just a few bright or sunny intervals, more especially in the west. Most places will be dry but there may be the odd snow flurry in some parts. The easterly wind will be mainly light but fresh in the South, giving an added bite to the low temperatures. Scotland and Northern Ireland will be cloudy with the odd slight snow shower, though the occasional sunny break is expected. A few overnight freezing fog patches may linger throughout the day.

London, SE, Central S & SW England, E Anglia, Channel Isles, S Wales: cloudy with snow flurries.

Midlands, E & NW England, N Wales, Lake District, Isle of Man, SW Scotland, Glasgow: dull and cloudy. Snow flurries. Wind east, light or moderate. Max 1C (34F).

NE England, Borders, Edinburgh & Dundee, Aberdeen, Central Highlands, Moray Firth, NE Scotland: mostly cloudy. Risk of some freezing fog patches. Wind light and variable. Cold. Max 1C (34F).

Argyll, NW Scotland, Orkney, Shetland, Northern Ireland: cloudy with occasional sleet or snow showers. A few sunny intervals. Max 3C (37F).

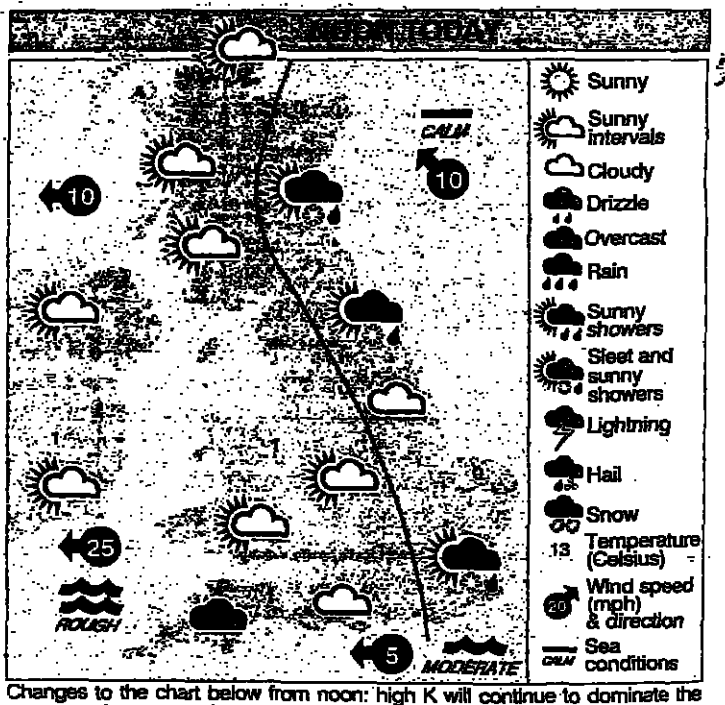
Outlook: little change.

AROUND BRITAIN YESTERDAY

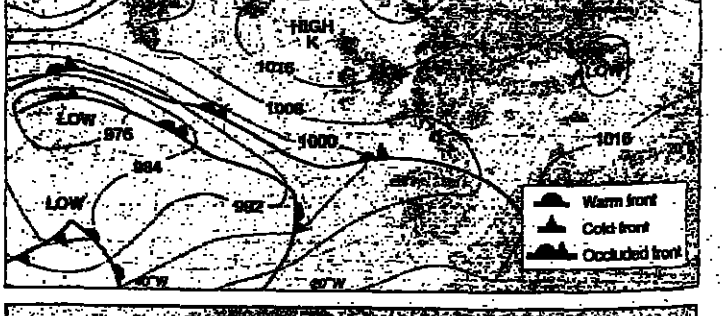
Area	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Rain	Max	Min
London	5	SE	100	0.0	8	2
Edinburgh	4	SE	100	0.0	7	1
Belfast	6	SE	100	0.0	9	3
Cardiff	5	SE	100	0.0	8	2
Manchester	4	SE	100	0.0	7	1
Sheffield	4	SE	100	0.0	7	1
Nottingham	4	SE	100	0.0	7	1
Leeds	4	SE	100	0.0	7	1
Birmingham	4	SE	100	0.0	7	1
Coventry	4	SE	100	0.0	7	1
Southampton	5	SE	100	0.0	8	2
Bristol	5	SE	100	0.0	8	2
Exeter	5	SE	100	0.0	8	2
Plymouth	5	SE	100	0.0	8	2
Cardiff	5	SE	100	0.0	8	2
Belfast	6	SE	100	0.0	9	3
London	5	SE	100	0.0	8	2
Edinburgh	4	SE	100	0.0	7	1
Belfast	6	SE	100	0.0	9	3
Cardiff	5	SE	100	0.0	8	2
Manchester	4	SE	100	0.0	7	1
Sheffield	4	SE	100	0.0	7	1
Nottingham	4	SE	100	0.0	7	1
Leeds	4	SE	100	0.0	7	1
Birmingham	4	SE	100	0.0	7	1
Coventry	4	SE	100	0.0	7	1
Southampton	5	SE	100	0.0	8	2
Bristol	5	SE	100	0.0	8	2
Exeter	5	SE	100	0.0	8	2
Plymouth	5	SE	100	0.0	8	2
Cardiff	5	SE	100	0.0	8	2
Belfast	6	SE	100	0.0	9	3

ABROAD

Area	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Rain	Max	Min
Paris	8	SE	100	0.0	11	5
London	5	SE	100	0.0	8	2
Edinburgh	4	SE	100	0.0	7	1
Belfast	6	SE	100	0.0	9	3
Cardiff	5	SE	100	0.0	8	2
Manchester	4	SE	100	0.0	7	1
Sheffield	4	SE	100	0.0	7	1
Nottingham	4	SE	100	0.0	7	1
Leeds	4	SE	100	0.0	7	1
Birmingham	4	SE	100	0.0	7	1
Coventry	4	SE	100	0.0	7	1
Southampton	5	SE	100	0.0	8	2
Bristol	5	SE	100	0.0	8	2
Exeter	5	SE	100	0.0	8	2
Plymouth	5	SE	100	0.0	8	2
Cardiff	5	SE	100	0.0	8	2
Belfast	6	SE	100	0.0	9	3
London	5	SE	100	0.0	8	2
Edinburgh	4	SE	100	0.0	7	1
Belfast	6	SE	100	0.0	9	3
Cardiff	5	SE	100	0.0	8	2
Manchester	4	SE	100	0.0	7	1
Sheffield	4	SE	100	0.0	7	1
Nottingham	4	SE	100	0.0	7	1
Leeds	4	SE	100	0.0	7	1
Birmingham	4	SE	100	0.0	7	1
Coventry	4	SE	100	0.0	7	1
Southampton	5	SE	100	0.0	8	2
Bristol	5	SE	100	0.0	8	2
Exeter	5	SE	100	0.0	8	2
Plymouth	5	SE	100	0.0	8	2
Cardiff	5	SE	100	0.0	8	2
Belfast	6	SE	100	0.0	9	3



Changes to the chart below from noon: High K will continue to dominate the weather across the UK, and will slowly drift southeast and decline

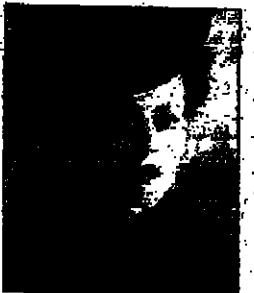


TODAY	AM	HT	PM	HT	TODAY	AM	HT	PM	HT
London Bridge	00:35	08	15:00	6.8	Leath	01:30	5.32	13:51	9.5
Aberdeen	00:35	07	15:00	6.8	Leath	01:30	5.32	13:51	9.5
Aberdeen	00:35	07	15:00	6.8	Leath	01:30	5.32	13:51	9.5
Aberdeen	00:35	07	15:00	6.8	Leath	01:30	5.32	13:51	9.5
Aberdeen	00:35	07	15:00	6.8	Leath	01:30	5.32	13:51	9.5
Aberdeen	00:35	07	15:00	6.8	Leath	01:30	5.32	13:51	9.5
Aberdeen	00:35	07	15:00	6.8	Leath	01:30	5.32	13:51	9.5
Aberdeen	00:35	07	15:00	6.8	Leath	01:30	5.32	13:51	9.5
Aberdeen	00:35	07	15:00	6.8	Leath	01:30	5.32	13:51	9.5
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Aberdeen	00:35	07	15:00	6.8	Leath	01:30	5.32	13:51	9.5
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Aberdeen	00:35	07	15:00	6.8	Leath	01:30	5.32	13:51	9.5
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Aberdeen	00:35	07	15:00	6.8	Leath	01:30	5.32	13:51	9.5
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BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 8 1997

Microsoft cracks international software piracy ring

By FRASER NELSON
MICROSOFT, the world's largest software company, has uncovered what it claims is the largest ring of smuggled computer programs ever to come to light, after investigating two British software distributors.

Q&M Technology, a computer company based in Surrey, and Multinero Distribution, a software company based in Essex, had been named as part of the unauthorised software network which encompasses the US, Canada and the Bahamas. Microsoft says it has so far uncovered more than £100,000 worth of unauthorised software from the supply chain, and expects to seize more as the network unravels.

The supply chain was first uncovered by a complaint from a customer who had bought a copy of Microsoft Office from Q&M Software. Microsoft took issue with the company, which it found to be storing £20,000 worth of "grey software" — bought at a reduced

educational price in the US, then repackaged as new for the full-price retail market in the UK. It then traced the software to Multinero Distribution, where it found more consignments of the grey software. At the same time, Customs officers at Heathrow found a consignment of suspicious software bound for Multinero, and passed it to Microsoft. It too was identified as grey software from the US. Two further consignments were seized at Heathrow, with a total

value of £77,000. Microsoft says that the software was repackaged en route, stripped of its educational badges and dressed to resemble high street packaging complete with the company's logo laser-printed on a security sticker. Q&M has agreed to surrender its holdings of the grey software, and pay undisclosed damages to Microsoft. Multinero has agreed to pass over its stock, but it is still in negotiations with the company. Neither company was available for

comment. Sharon Baylay, marketing director of Microsoft's UK software theft office, said: "This is by far the largest illegal software scheme we have encountered. It shows that software theft is a global issue, and underlines our commitment to combating it." The discovery comes as Microsoft resigned from Fast Britain's domestic alliance against software theft. It said it regarded the bulk of software theft as coming through international channels, and it was looking to refocus its energies on the global software smuggling market.

Treasury forecasts may go out to contract

By JANET RUSSELL, ECONOMICS EDITOR
THE Treasury is to look into whether its key role as economic forecaster should be privatised but any decision will not be made until after the election.

In a move that a leading Civil Service trade union immediately described as bizarre and promised to oppose, the Treasury said that it will appoint a consultant by the end of this month to study whether it is feasible to contract out forecasting.

This study is expected to take three months and would not be completed until early May. If it was decided the exercise had potential, the Treasury would ask for bids to carry out the work.

Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, had asked for economic forecasting to be subject to market test procedures by late 1996. Treasury officials admitted yesterday that the original timetable for this exercise had slipped and that any decision would have to be taken by the next Government.

Martin Weale, director of the National Institute of Economic and Social Research and a member of the Chancellor's independent forecasting panel, said: "In some sense, the Treasury is ducking the decision but, given the proximity of the election, one could regard it as good manners that it has not made any irreversible decision."

Mr Weale, whose institute has had a far superior forecasting record to the Treasury's over the past two years, said it would almost definitely bid for the work if forecasting were to be contracted out.

He did not oppose the idea in principle. Under a Labour government, the independent forecasting panel could be turned into an American-style Council of Economic Advisers and the forecasting now done by the Treasury could be taken over by this council.

He also suggested that passing control of the economic forecast to an outside body might put an end to suspicions that the Treasury's forecast is tainted by political bias. Mr Weale cited Mr Clarke's November 1995 Budget forecast of 3 per cent growth. "We had the impression at the time that the Treasury didn't even believe the forecast and that the Treasury's forecast was designed to fit what the Chancellor wanted."

However, there was vehement criticism of the proposal yesterday from The Association of First Division Civil Servants. Jonathan Baume, FCA general secretary designate, said: "In effect, the Government is saying that the heart of the Treasury's work could be done by the private sector. Economic forecasting and monitoring is part of the core business of the Government and the idea that it could be done by unaccountable private firms is bizarre."

He said: "The Government should consider very seriously the implications of handing over such sensitive work to firms or organisations who are not bound by Civil Service rules on confidentiality and political neutrality."

The Treasury said that confidentiality is one of the issues that would be examined. It stressed that, if the consultant were to decide that contracting out were feasible, the current in-house Treasury team of 45 people would put forward a bid. The Treasury would provide the money to employ an external adviser to give the in-house team the necessary management expertise to craft a coherent bid.

The functions that will be looked at for potential privatisation include the central forecast of the macro-economy, the forecasting and monitoring of the public finances and all the work used to make the necessary economic assumptions for planning public spending.

Pennington, page 27



Aubrey Adams, managing director of Savills, left, with Richard Jewson, chairman

Savills soars to £3m at halfway stage

SAVILLS, the international property consultant, yesterday reported a 64 per cent jump in half-time profits to £3 million and raised the interim dividend to 1p (0.75p), payable on February 18 (Robert Miller writes).

Lanica's rapid share price rise falters

THE miraculous rise and rise of Lanica Trust, whose shares climbed from £2 to over £20 in just two months, stalled yesterday when Littlewoods denied rumours that it plans to use Lanica as a vehicle for listing its retail business.

The denial sent the narrowly held shares slithering £4 to £16.50. They later recovered in jerky afternoon trading to close at £18.25.

Littlewoods said there had been no talks of a major link with Lanica — run by Andrew Regan, a 31-year-old entrepreneur — but they were discussing a small deal to supply Lanica with goods and infrastructure for a mail order business with which it is involved. The business, Select Catalogues, is due to launch a mail order service for the armed forces.

The rumour-mongers had suggested something far more dramatic: that privately owned Littlewoods, which is in talks with Sears about buying Freemans, wanted to reverse its mail order and high street retailing business into Lanica to gain a stock market listing.

Pennington, page 27

Lloyds poised to sell Mortgage Express loanbook

By ANNE ASHWORTH
THE £1.6 billion loanbook of Mortgage Express, a home loans division of Lloyds TSB, is understood to be up for sale.

Possible buyers for the business include a Republic of Ireland bank or building society, a UK building society, or a foreign bank, wanting a foothold in the fast recovering UK property market.

Yesterday Lloyds TSB would not discuss the possible sale, saying that it did not comment on "market speculation".

Established in 1986 as a centralised lender, selling through intermediaries, Mortgage Express now specialises in loans for borrowers in negative equity, the self-employed and investors in residential property. It has continued to operate as a separate business within Lloyds TSB, despite the decision to bring the bank's home loans activities under the C&G name.

After an auspicious beginning the lender became a casualty of the collapse of house prices in the late 1980s. In 1991, it ceased to take new business after the disclosure that it was losing £1 million a week, and that 13 per cent of its

borrowers were in arrears. There were unsuccessful attempts to sell the loanbook, then valued at £3 billion. Mortgage Express has now been revived as a lender for niche markets, such as contract workers.

The view that Lloyds TSB would wish to dispose of Mortgage Express has been strengthened by the elevation to Andrew Longhurst, C&G chief executive. He will be responsible for consumer finance, defining the bank's role in the mortgage market. A senior figure at another lender said: "Mr Longhurst's appointment was the watershed for Mortgage Express."

First National, a Republic of Ireland building society which last year acquired The Mortgage Corporation loan book, said it was not interested in Mortgage Express. The Birmingham Midshires Building Society which has, in the past 18 months, acquired the Western Trust & Savings and Hypo-MSL mortgage books, also said it has no plans to bid for the business, although a spokesman added that the society still remained "acquisitive".

Pennington, page 27

Former Barings chief challenges SFA ruling

By ROBERT MILLER, BANKING CORRESPONDENT
RON BAKER, the former Barings executive cleared last year on four out of five disciplinary charges brought against him by a City watchdog, yesterday lodged a notice of appeal against the one charge on which he was found guilty.

The Securities and Futures Authority, the regulator for brokers and futures dealers, confirmed last night that Mr Baker is to appeal against his public reprimand and an order to pay £7,500 towards costs. A three-man independent appeals tribunal will now hear Mr Baker's case although the SFA will not appeal against any of the original tribunal's findings.

The SFA had proposed that Mr Baker, who joined the merchant bank in 1992, and Mary Walz, another senior Barings executive, be banned from holding a senior position in the City for up to three years and pay some £10,000 towards the regulator's costs.

The SFA charges were brought in relation to their supervision of Nick Leeson, the rogue trader whose fraudulent dealings on the Far East money markets caused Barings to collapse with debts of £830 million almost two years ago. Ms Walz, who tried unsuccessfully to sue Barings for her £500,000 bonus, reached a settlement with the SFA and will not therefore appeal against the similar penalties.

Mr Baker, who is represented by Fox Williams, the law firm, maintains that he was brought in to supervise Leeson just weeks before the merchant bank crashed and had already begun to question some of the trader's deals.

Pennington, page 27

Bookies win lottery tussle with Camelot

By FRASER NELSON
BOOKMAKERS have defeated an attempt by Camelot, operator of the National Lottery, to stifle 49s — a rival game launched three weeks ago.

The Crown Prosecution Service yesterday rejected claims by Camelot that the bookmakers' lottery was breaking gaming laws by allowing fixed-odds bets on an event based on luck. It found that it was not a lottery as defined by law and therefore beyond the reaches of the National Lottery Act 1993.

Camelot said that it was considering whether to press for a judicial review. John Morgan, chairman of 49s, said he was delighted with the outcome. "We did considerable research before we launched this, and were completely sure of our legal footing before starting out."

He added: "The bookmaking industry has lost 9 per cent of its sales since the National Lottery started, and we stand to lose even more when its midweek draw begins. We are an industry that has been forced to look after itself, and we have been creative to keep the business alive and kicking."

The 49s game, broadcast to bookmakers' in-house television after the last race of the day, offers a fixed-odds bet on a lottery-style draw. While the maximum payout is £100,000, gamblers who correctly predict three balls can claim £511 on a £1 bet, as opposed to the £10 paid for three correct balls on the National Lottery.

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Firms urged to spell out staff skills in reports

By Philip Bassett
INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

BRITISH firms should put details of employees' skills and experience in their company balance sheets, personnel managers say today — claiming that the way people are managed can affect share prices.

Leaders of Britain's personnel managers are to press the Stock Exchange's inquiry into corporate governance, headed by Sir Ronald Hampel, chairman of ICI, to recommend that companies should publish annual statements

showing the link between people management and business objectives. In a report today, the Institute of Personnel and Development (IPD) says that while measuring the value of a company's people management strategies is difficult, it is possible and important.

John Stevens, IPD director of professional policy, says: "Investors make decisions on the health, effectiveness and prospects of companies knowing very little about the people strategies and practices adopted by those companies. This represents a huge gap in their understanding of those businesses." The IPD

says companies should ensure that annual reports include information on employment and skill levels, training, employee involvement, financial participation, job security, employability, promotion and recruitment.

Mr Stevens says: "To be successful, businesses need flexible, motivated and efficient people. It is time the City acknowledged that people are the most important asset and that the way they are managed can have a critical effect on shareholders' dividends."

The IPD's study, *Investors' Views of People Management*, suggests that the financial sector

increasingly appreciates the link between well-managed employees and business success. The report draws on work done with companies such as BT, Kingfisher, GKN, Marks & Spencer, Kleinwort Benson, Unilever, Prudential, RJR, Glaxo Wellcome, BTR, British Airways and MAM.

But the study, carried out by City University, shows in an analysis of the annual reports and accounts of the top 50 FT-SE companies that training and development is mentioned by only 15, while many more — 24 in all — report on environmental issues.

Trust for Maxwell pensioners to close

By Adam Jones

THE Maxwell Pensioners' Trust, set up to support pension funds plundered by Robert Maxwell, is to close.

The trust was created by the Government in 1992 after the theft of about £440 million from several Maxwell company funds was discovered. It raised £6 million in donations from companies and individuals, including some who had dealt with Robert Maxwell. The money was released, as interest-free loans or as payment for annuities, on a drip-fed basis to affected funds and individuals, ensuring that 32,000 pensioners received their expected payments.

In March 1995, the Maxwell pension trustees agreed a £276 million settlement package from the Mirror Group and other institutions. It is now thought that none of the affected pensioners should lose out in the long term.

After the settlement, the Maxwell Pensioners Unit, set up in tandem with the trust to monitor progress towards a settlement, was disbanded.

Only a handful of staff from the Department of Social Security were employed by the two bodies, working from offices in St James's Square, London.

The trust's chairman is Jane Newell, one of four trustees. She took over from Lord Cuckney, formerly Sir John Cuckney. He resigned to take up an

independent role as mediator before the settlement.

Mrs Newell said: "I'm absolutely delighted that we have reached this point. Four-and-a-half years ago, we could not imagine it being so successful."

Announcing the closure, Peter Lilley, Social Security Secretary, said: "This is a very satisfactory outcome. I wish to pay tribute to all the work of the trustees, which was unpaid, and to thank those who contributed to MPT funds."

Although the trust is viewed as a success, some believe that it enabled government bodies to play down their own regulatory mistakes.

The total raised by the trust — which grew to £7 million with interest — was also regarded as disappointing by some insiders in the Maxwell clean-up. However, one sceptic added: "Even though it was a relatively small amount of money, it was all that was needed to keep the pensions being paid."

Mrs Newell said the amount raised compared favourably with appeals for causes such as the Hillsborough disaster.

The remaining £1.75 million will be paid to Clay and Partners, administrators of the two funds still experiencing financial difficulties. It will officially close at the end of January.



George Mallinckrodt has received an honorary knighthood for outstanding services

President of Schroders honoured

By Robert Miller

THE president of Schroders, the City's most successful independent investment bank, has been awarded an honorary knighthood.

George Mallinckrodt, a German national who joined Schroders in New York in 1954 and was transferred to London in 1960, received his award from the Queen "in recognition of outstanding services rendered over many years to banking and finance in the City of London."

In tandem with Win Bischoff, chairman of Schroders and a fellow German, Mr Mallinckrodt has presided over the transformation of the family-owned bank into an international operation with more than 5,000 employees spread over 33 countries. It is also a member of the elite FT-SE 100 club with a market capitalisation of nearly £3 billion.

Mr Mallinckrodt, who grew up in France and Germany and became a director of Schroders in 1977, is also a non-executive director of Siemens and the Foreign Colonial German Investment Trust.

New car sales at seven-year high

SALES of new cars jumped through the two million mark last year to their highest level for seven years, but carmakers and traders said that private buyers remained cautious (Christine Buckley writes).

Figures from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders show a 4.12 per cent

rise in cars bought in 1996, compared with 2,025,450 in 1995. Ernie Thompson, chief executive, said: "The December figures end the year on a positive note with welcome signs of a return of the private buyer apparent in the last three months."

But the number of private

buyers increased only 2.3 per cent in 1996 and as a percentage of total sales fell from 47 per cent in 1995 to 46 per cent last year.

The society said that although the numbers of private buyers had picked up in the last quarter, this could prove a tricky as uncertainty was triggered by the general

election. December's new car sales rose 9.23 per cent, compared with the same month in 1995, while private buyers increased 14 per cent. Last year's commercial vehicle sales were ahead of 1995's by 2.78 per cent to 256,869 although December showed a year-on-year drop of 5.49 per cent.

Eagle Star offers refunds

By Marianne Curphey

EAGLE STAR, the life and general insurance arm of BAT Industries, has launched the first UK pension with a money-back guarantee.

The policy, dismissed as "a gimmick" by Virgin, Eagle Star's rival, pledges to reimburse customers who wish to transfer to another pension provider within two years.

All fees and charges will be refunded and the current market value of the pension transferred to another provider. Customers will not be allowed to take a cash lump sum.

However, Eagle Star expects fewer than 5 per cent of customers to take up the offer. The new, simpler pension product will be available direct by telephone and is part of BAT Industries' drive to increase its share of the financial services market.

BAT may demerge its financial services division and is believed to have discussed selling part of it to Commercial Union, the composite insurer.

Advance of 22% at Heiton

FROM EILEEN MCCABE IN DUBLIN

BUOYANCY in the Irish Republic's construction sector fuelled a 22 per cent improvement in interim pre-tax profits to Ir£4.7 million at Heiton Holdings, one of the country's leading builders' suppliers groups.

The company said that earnings per share for the six months to October 31 were up 21 per cent to Ir£4.7p.

Overall group turnover for the period was up 8 per cent to almost Ir£72 million, with the builders' merchant and steel division performing particularly well.

Atlantic Homecare, the group's do-it-yourself division, recorded a 5 per cent increase in turnover.

Operating margins at 6.8 per cent of turnover for the six months were up from 6.3 per cent for the comparable period in 1995.

The company declared a 21 per cent increase in the interim dividend to Ir1.65p, payable on April 7.

Rival to KKR to unveil \$1bn deal

By Eric Reguly

THE former president of US West International, one of the biggest players in the British cable and media industry, launched an investment fund yesterday and is to announce his first deal, worth more than \$1 billion, this month.

Richard Callahan, 55, who ran US West in London until last spring, said the investment will be in the entertainment sector in continental Europe. "It'll be a big one and we have two more in the queue."

The deal will be made by Callahan Associates (CAI), a financial group formed to acquire and develop projects in communications, entertainment and mobile-phone networks around the world.

Mr Callahan said CAI will be like Kohlberg Kravis Roberts, the leveraged buyout firm

that controls Newsquest, the UK newspaper company that bought Westminster Press last year. It will have a core of investors, such as pension funds and securities houses, recruiting others on a deal-by-deal basis. Returns will come from selling or floating companies a few years after the initial investment.

CAI's executives include David Colley, managing director of Videotron, the cable company, who will run CAI's London office, and Arthur Barron, former chairman of Time Warner International.

CAI intends to make several billion dollars of equity investments in the next five years. Mr Callahan said it will evaluate the cable operations of KPN, the Dutch telecoms and postal group, which are for sale.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Scott Pickford torn between bidders

SCOTT PICKFORD, the geological consultancy, was poised between two bidders yesterday after Core Laboratories, the US geographical company, won the board's approval for a provisional £6.67 million takeover offer. However, Don Scott, Pickford's founder and chairman, has personally rejected the offer and pledged his support to the £6.05 million bid that Aerodata, an Australian geological consultancy, is poised to make.

Mr Scott said the board had approved Core Laboratories' offer from a financial perspective only, adding: "Whether Core Lab's offer would be good for the company is another matter." Aerodata's offer is also being supported by Tony Woodliffe and Gabriel Simonian, the two other directors who are siding with Mr Scott in the 3-3 boardroom split. The developments come a day before Pickford activates its share swap with Aerodata, which from tomorrow will leave the Australian firm controlling 33.1 per cent of the company.

Bespak shares surge

SHARES in Bespak continued their strong recovery, jumping 46p to 527½p, as the asthma inhaler maker reported a 43 per cent rise in first-half profits. In the 26 weeks to November 1, they rose from £3.5 million to £5 million on sales 10 per cent higher at £39.5 million. Bespak was helped by a big rise in the sales of Accuhaler, the dry powder inhaler it makes for Glaxo Wellcome. Sales of Accuhaler reached £4.5 million, causing Bespak UK's sales of drug delivery devices to almost double to £7.5 million. The interim dividend rises 10 per cent to 4.62p, to be paid on February 21.

Salvage firm held back

UNIVERSAL SALVAGE, the UK's largest contract motor salvage company, said growth was being held back by the shortage of suitable storage and auction sites, particularly in the South of England. Cliff Bassett, chairman, said the volume of vehicles handled by the company had grown strongly. But the lack of suitable sites meant a higher number of vehicles were auctioned through existing sites, attended by a relatively stable number of bidders. As a result, prices achieved at auction had fallen. Margins were also adversely affected by the adoption of a new code of practice from the Association of British Insurers.

US factory orders fall

NEW orders to factories in America fell in November, the Commerce Department said yesterday, partially reversing a strong showing in October. Orders fell 0.4 per cent to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of \$320.5 billion, after rising a revised 1.1 per cent in October. But shipments of finished products and order backlogs continued to rise, the department said, suggesting some underlying strength in the industrial sector toward the end of last year. The department said shipments rose 0.9 per cent while both unfilled orders and inventories were up 0.4 per cent.

Payout alert by Union

SHARES in Union fell 12½p, to 81p, yesterday after the financial services and trading group said that it did not expect to pay a final dividend for 1996 and was considering its future direction. The company said that the decision was related to the need to write off advance corporation tax, which it had expected to write forward. The company also reported delays to a project to sell tax-sheltered software-related products in Canada. Union said that the Bank of England's decision to widen the range of participants in its money market dealings "will have a significant impact on the group's future".

Newmont raises offer

NEWMONT MINING has raised its unsolicited takeover bid for Santa Fe Pacific Gold to \$16.50 per share, or \$2.2 billion, in an attempt to derail the company's proposed merger with Homestake Mining Co. Santa Fe agreed in early December to be acquired by Homestake in a stock deal then valued at \$17.42 per share, or \$2.3 billion. Based on Homestake's \$13.50 price yesterday its bid of 1.15 of its shares for each Santa Fe share would be worth \$2 billion. The latest Newmont offer, of 0.40 of a Newmont share for each Santa Fe share, compares with the initial offer of 0.33 of a share.

EXCHANGE RATES

Bank	Bank	Japan Yen	
Australia \$	2.25	209.80	183.80
Austria Sch	13.76	0.948	0.934
Belgium Fr	18.24	3.109	2.879
Canada \$	57.24	2.25	2.31
Denmark Kr	2.412	11.46	10.86
Dynars Cyp	0.825	278.00	284.00
France Fr	10.64	8.45	7.85
Germany DM	9.46	228.00	216.00
France Fr	8.31	15.37	11.57
France Fr	2.79	2.45	2.24
France Fr	2.79	128.00	108.00
France Fr	4.07	1.68	1.59
Hong Kong \$	13.71	12.71	
India Rupee	100	100	
Indonesia Rp	1.08	0.96	
Israel Sh	6.78	5.13	
Italy Lira	2705	2650	

Rates for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Discount rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.



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Midland Bank plc, 25 Fenchurch Lane, London EC2 5EX

□ Savills sees return of housing party □ Surprise, surprise — the Barings affair drags on □ Hacker demands instant action

Home ideal drives market

THE idea that the £100,000 house you live in might be worth £150,000 in three years, or that your £200,000 home could be worth £300,000, might seem cause for celebration. The excesses of the property market during the 1980s were no fun at all if you only arrived at the party were there for the entire decade.

Wise heads will shake, and worry about a return to 1980s property madness. Wise heads might recall that housing market forecasts are generally wrong, in one direction or another. Yet there are arguments to support the prediction by Savills of a 50 per cent increase, nominal, in house prices by the end of the decade.

First, the forecast. Savills expects homes to rise by 12 per cent this year, a fair view whatever the result of the election because Labour's stance on interest rates will be little different from that of the Tories. House price inflation will then increase to 15 per cent in 1998 and 18 per cent in 1999, representing close to a 50 per cent compound rise.

Savills is basing its arguments on the historic relationship between earnings and residential prices, which have fallen by more than a third since 1989, and the level of affordability of houses at present. The first ratio is low, the second high. A study just before

Christmas by UBS, the stockbroker, came to the same conclusion, except that UBS saw prices up by 46 per cent from 1996 to end-2000, using slightly different methodology. Here are three reasons for supposing both are right, in spirit, if not in detail.

The rise over three years might not be 50 per cent — that might take five years, or seven, or eight. The distinction is an academic one, if you have any exposure to the housing market.

□ Affordability. Here, UBS added an extra component to the mix. People do not tend to take out mortgages that they cannot afford; they can afford it until higher interest rates or deteriorating personal finances put it beyond reach. UBS assumes a low interest rate environment going forward, and few authorities expect mortgage rates to hit double figures again. In such an environment, borrowers are prepared to commit more of their earnings to house purchases, and lenders can be more innovative in the packages that they offer to smooth out future payments.

□ Scarcity. The Government expects 4.4 million households to be

created by demographics alone over the next two decades. However, builders will continue to be blocked from putting up homes where people wish to live. There can be only one effect on homes lucky enough to be in such areas. □ The trickle-down effect. By the year 2010, most of the children of those who bought homes in the late 1940s and early 1950s will have inherited. The key question is how much of that free capital will go towards a new home, given that they are of an age group that may already own a big enough house, or towards one for their offspring — or on pensions and other higher living costs, such as medical expenses. Any diversion into the property market, however, will react with the scarcity noted above.

Here is one proviso. The housing boom noted by Savills and others is highly selective. The UK has always been a collection of individual housing markets. Demographics — the desire of an ageing population or one now raising children to live in a low-crime environment with good local schools — will increase the disparity in prices



between areas, however close they are on the map. This is already happening. Not everyone will be invited to the housing party of the decade.

But try this one test, for which Pennington is indebted to Savills. Do you live in your ideal home? Do any of your contemporaries? Nothing drives markets harder than aspirations that suddenly become affordable.

SFA feeling the draught

THE disciplinary actions of the Securities and Futures Authority after the Barings affair are dragging on so long that they are mainly of relevance to debate

about the structure of City regulation. Presumably investment banks and their customers have by now made their own judgments about the desirability of employing at vast expense those who failed to stop the fraudulent young man who was "earning" their bonuses.

The junior culprit languishes in Changi jail. There is still an atavistic feeling that more heads should be severed over an affair that led not merely to the financial collapse of Barings but also extinguished most of the rest of Britain's leading independent merchant banks.

Like other City regulators, the SFA is better geared to dealing with naughtiness than with incompetence, moral cowardice or sins of omission. The long, sad, expensive tale of the SFA's attempts to pursue cases to its own tribunal against those who did not volunteer to be punished suggests that its procedures sit in a draughty halfway house. It lies somewhere between the rough justice offered by practitioner-regulated professional bodies or by the Bank of England, and the more fearful if random majesty

of the English criminal law or America's Securities and Exchange Commission. No prizes for guessing which way the political wind is blowing.

Forceful marketing, Sir Humphrey

THE scene is the Department of Administrative Affairs. Jim Hacker, Secretary of State, is grilling his civil servants about progress towards privatising the Treasury's economic forecasts.

Hacker: Ah, Sir Humphrey. We agreed that market forces had to be introduced to the Treasury within two years. Why the delay?

Sir Humphrey: The progress towards assessing the feasibility of contracting with a service provider to undertake the central economic forecast of macro-economic aggregates, the forecasting and monitoring of public finances, the work underpinning recommendations about the economic assumptions for public expenditure planning and the regular assessment of out-turn economic data against the forecast has been unable to be

expedited without third party input into the advice and consultation process.

Hacker: I'm sorry?

Bernard Woolley: He means we got a consultant in to help us.

Hacker: I see. But any decision will arrive just before the election. Even if we win, they might still decide it isn't worth it. It's hardly the firm implementation of a policy decision, is it?

Sir Humphrey: If, in the light of the consultant's report, Minister, a market test is confirmed as feasible, potential service providers would be invited to make bids, and Treasury staff would be able to mount an in-house bid with the help of internally-funded external advisers.

Hacker: So we're going to save money by paying our own staff to mount a bid to save their jobs?

Sir Humphrey: Yes, Minister.

Regan-omics

FORGET houses — for a straight rerun of the late 1980s, look at the nonsense surrounding Lancia, the investment shell, run by Andrew Regan, that sounds like a handcream. Whizz-kids, like policemen, seem to get younger; perhaps we need a new stock market measure here. Mr Regan sells on a multiple of 1.18. This is the price his company trades on, in pounds million, for every one of his years.

Morgan and Lehman soar to record profits

FROM RICHARD THOMSON IN NEW YORK

BOOMING financial markets helped Morgan Stanley and Lehman Brothers to achieve record profits last year, in line with spectacular results reported by other Wall Street investment banks.

Morgan Stanley's profits leapt by 43 per cent to break through \$1 billion for the first time, at \$1.02 billion for the year to November 30. Investment banking, the firm's main area of activity, performed strongly, with a 34 per cent increase in revenues, to \$1.9 billion.

Investment banking revenues of \$572 million in the fourth quarter surpassed the previous quarterly record of \$542 million, set in the second quarter of fiscal 1996. The bank said that it had retained

its top ranking in global mergers and acquisitions for the second year running. Trading revenues and revenues from investment management also increased substantially during the year.

Net income for the fourth quarter, to November 30, was up by 26 per cent, at \$236 million, and 8 per cent ahead of the third quarter of fiscal 1996.

The rising stock market and hectic takeover activity in the United States last year gave many banks windfall profits and have pushed annual bonuses to unprecedented levels. Shortly before Christmas, Goldman Sachs announced that its 1996 profits almost matched the bumper year of 1993, and

other banks have unveiled equally impressive profits.

Lehman reported full-year profits of \$416 million, an increase of 84 per cent from the \$253 million profit in 1995. In spite of a \$50 million charge for redundancies and other cost-cutting, the firm enjoyed a 121 per cent rise in its earnings in the fourth quarter, to November 30, to \$177 million.

Richard Fuld, chairman and chief executive, said that it had been by far the best final quarter since the bank went public in 1994.

Lehman said that all of its main businesses, including fixed income, equity and investment banking, produced strong profits. It ranked third in the world among global underwriters of debt and equity issues, and advised on mergers and acquisitions worth more than \$98 billion.

The bank said that part of the jump in profits was attributable to heavy cost-cutting, which has substantially reduced recurring expenses. During the fourth quarter, the firm pulled out of several less profitable markets, including precious metals, around the world and energy trading in the US and Europe.

It also concentrated its foreign exchange activities into fewer offices and consolidated its risk management activities in Asia into its Tokyo office. Together, these rationalisations, which included substantial job losses, required a one-off charge of \$50 million.



Francis Mackay, left, and Roger Matthews, finance director, get first refusal

Sales boost for beleaguered Lloyds Chemists

BY SARAH CUNNINGHAM

LLOYDS CHEMISTS yesterday reported higher sales in all its divisions in the last three months of 1996, but said that profits were still being hit by the prolonged bid battle between UniChem and Gehe for the company.

Allen Lloyd, chairman of Lloyds Chemists, said that the company will write to shareholders shortly after January 17 to recommend whether to accept Gehe's cash offer or UniChem's cash and shares offer. January 17 is the last date on which either offer may be increased.

Gehe commented that the figures "confirm its caution over Lloyds Chemists' trading". Gehe said that the sales made its 500p per share cash bid look "extremely generous".

Lloyds Chemists said that the pharmaceutical division had faced the greatest challenge from the uncertainty surrounding the competing offers from Gehe and UniChem. Retaining key staff had been costly, it said.



Lloyd: guidance on offer

Sales in the three months to the end of December, the second quarter of its financial year, were up 8.9 per cent. In the first half sales were 8.5 per cent ahead. Holland & Barrett, the health food chain, had like-for-like sales 5.8 per cent higher in the quarter. Pharmaceutical sales were 12.1 per cent ahead, chemists sales up 3.5 per cent and health and beauty sales advanced 9.7 per cent.

Wickes shares plunge on return from suspension

BY SARAH CUNNINGHAM

SHARES in Wickes, the DIY retailer whose former managers are under investigation by the Serious Fraud Office, closed yesterday at less than half their recalculated price.

The shares, which have been through a ten-for-one consolidation and a rights issue at 150p, began trading again yesterday after being suspended six months ago, and closed at 68p. They were suspended at 68p in June, after serious accounting irregularities were uncovered

in its buying department. But that price was yesterday recalculated by the Stock Exchange — taking into account the capital reconstruction — to stand at 417p.

Analysts said the premium to the rights issue price was because of speculation that another company — probably Kingfisher's B&Q or RMC's Great Mills — intends to bid for Wickes. However, no bidders came forward yesterday and John Richards, analyst with NatWest Markets, said

that neither Kingfisher nor RMC are likely to want to pay a high price for the business.

Other analysts said that potential bidders might be deterred by the confusion the repeated over-statement of profits caused to Wickes's accounts.

The alternative for Wickes is to try to carry on independently, in which case analysts are predicting a modest profit for next year.

Tempus, page 28

Compass in French catering deal

BY ALASDAIR MURRAY

COMPASS GROUP, the catering company, has secured a co-operation agreement with Compagnie Générale des Eaux, the French conglomerate, which ensures it has first refusal over catering contracts for Générale's 220,000 employees worldwide.

As part of the deal, Compass is paying £28 million for part of Générale's stake in Compagnie Générale de Restauration, its catering associate. After the deal, Compass will own an 11.7 per cent stake in the catering company, with Générale continuing to own 27 per cent.

Générale, which has UK interests in healthcare and water companies, has already announced it will sell the rest of its stake in the catering company. Compass said it had not signed a binding agreement to buy the rest of the stake, although it would be in a position to influence its sale. Générale de Restauration's management owns a majority stake in the company and has no immediate plans to sell.

Francis Mackay, Compass chief executive, said the deal would strengthen the company's position in the French market, which is the second largest market in Europe.

Tempus, page 28

Autolink wins £370m Scottish road contract

BY CHRISTINE BUCKLEY, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

SCOTLAND'S first road-building project to be carried out under the Private Finance Initiative has been awarded to a three-way consortium in a £370 million deal.

After a two-year bidding battle, the Scottish Office has given the contract to design, build, finance and operate a motorway linking the M6 at Carlisle with the A74 at Millbank, south of Glasgow, to Autolink Concessionaires, a company equally owned by Amey, Sir Robert McAlpine and Taylor Woodrow Construction Holdings.

Although the Scottish Office has completed a number of construction deals under the Private Finance Initiative (PFI), the Government's drive to involve private enterprise in public infrastructure projects, this is the first road-building contract. In common with other PFI schemes, there were long periods of bidding and tendering.

Two other big road-building contracts under the PFI are on the agenda in Scotland — for additions to the M8 and the M80, although a route for the M80 has yet to be agreed.

The operating cost of £370 million of the venture announced yesterday will run over the contract's 30-year

period. Work will start on the 75-mile stretch of road in spring. It is due to be completed by the next century. New works in the project, including completion of the new part of the M6 and upgrading part of the A74 will account for £200 million of the £370 million.

Amey, the facilities management and construction group, said that the contract will underpin its civil engineering division. Neil Ashley, chairman, said: "These contracts substantially secure our civil engineering workload for the next two years and also give us valuable long-term facilities management and maintenance business."

Babtie Group and Gibb will be design consultants for this first major road development in Scotland in recent years. Morgan Stanley will be the financial adviser. Ashurst Morris Crisp will handle legal work.

The Autolink grouping has been active in PFI work and was last year awarded a £330 million A19 contract. Amey and Sir Robert McAlpine are also involved in the Croydon Tramlink scheme, which started construction this week.

Tempus, page 28
PFI drive, page 30

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Jailed Daiwa trader pens critical book

FROM RICHARD THOMSON IN NEW YORK

THE rogue trader jailed in America for losing Daiwa bank \$1.1 billion in a bond-dealing scandal gives a damning account in a book of incompetence by US and Japanese regulators and dishonesty by his former employer.

In *The Confession*, written in jail, Toshio Iguchi says losses from unauthorised trading would have come to light much earlier but for carelessness by investigators from the Japanese Finance Ministry and the US Federal Reserve. He also accuses Daiwa of trying to cover up the losses and other regulatory transgressions in its New York

office. His account will embarrass the Fed which prides itself on the strictness of its regulation of banks, and to the Finance Ministry. It may also damage Daiwa in ongoing court cases with US authorities over its role in the affair.

He describes Daiwa filing a New York office that had not been authorised with cardboard boxes in 1992 to fool Fed officials into thinking it was not a trading room. The Fed examination which was supposed to take two days lasted 15 minutes and the examiners did not spot the ruse. Although the Fed later discovered it, it still failed to find out about Iguchi's mounting losses.

When Daiwa reported to the Finance Ministry that it was having problems

with the Fed, the ministry sent officials on what was supposed to be a week-long investigation. Iguchi feared he would be found out. However, the officials spent just an hour at Daiwa's midtown office chatting with top executives and failed to visit the Wall Street office. Instead they went to Las Vegas.

Iguchi does not deny his role in racking up one of the biggest dealing losses on record over a decade as a bond dealer in Daiwa's New York office. He undertook hundreds of unauthorised trades and then conspired to cover them up. He admitted to the losses in 1995 and was sentenced in December to four years in prison while Daiwa was banned by the US

authorities from trading in America. Daiwa claims that it only learnt of the loss when Iguchi admitted to it in July 1995. It then informed the Finance Ministry which did not warn US authorities for six weeks, a failure which infuriated the Fed.

Iguchi, however, says he held meetings with senior Daiwa executives to discuss how to hide the losses from US regulators. The executives considered transferring the loss to an offshore shell company in the Cayman Islands. According to his account, Daiwa not only knew about his unauthorised trades but was willing to mislead the banking regulators. Iguchi's book will be published next Tuesday.

THE TIMES
CITY DIARY

Hansen kicks off for Singer

HAVING outgrown the football pitch, hunky Alan Hansen is heading for the investment world. The former Scottish and Liverpool captain, who boasts a Latin A level, has struck a deal with Singer & Friedlander. However, the March of the Day commentator who puts Gary Lineker in the shade, will have to toughen-up if he wants to succeed in the City. Recently in London for a session with his new business partners, Hansen brought the meeting to a rather abrupt close. He wanted to get back to his family in Southport — the hipster had a date with his 15-year-old daughter... two tickets for the Boyzone concert.

Archers man

HOWARD DAVIES is obviously working too hard these days. Speaking at yesterday's Oxford Farming Conference, the Deputy Governor of the Bank of England admitted that he gleaned much of his knowledge on the common agricultural policy from listening to *The Archers*. "Relying on that source, I am not as well-informed as I used to be since *The Archers* is now mainly about those other traditional country pursuits — sex, drugs, and violence," he said, adding that, according to the show, David Archer was in the audience. "Too bad," Davies, well-informed listeners will know that Ruth Archer took Phil Archer's place at the conference.



"People say prices will be much better later."

Gilmour's menu

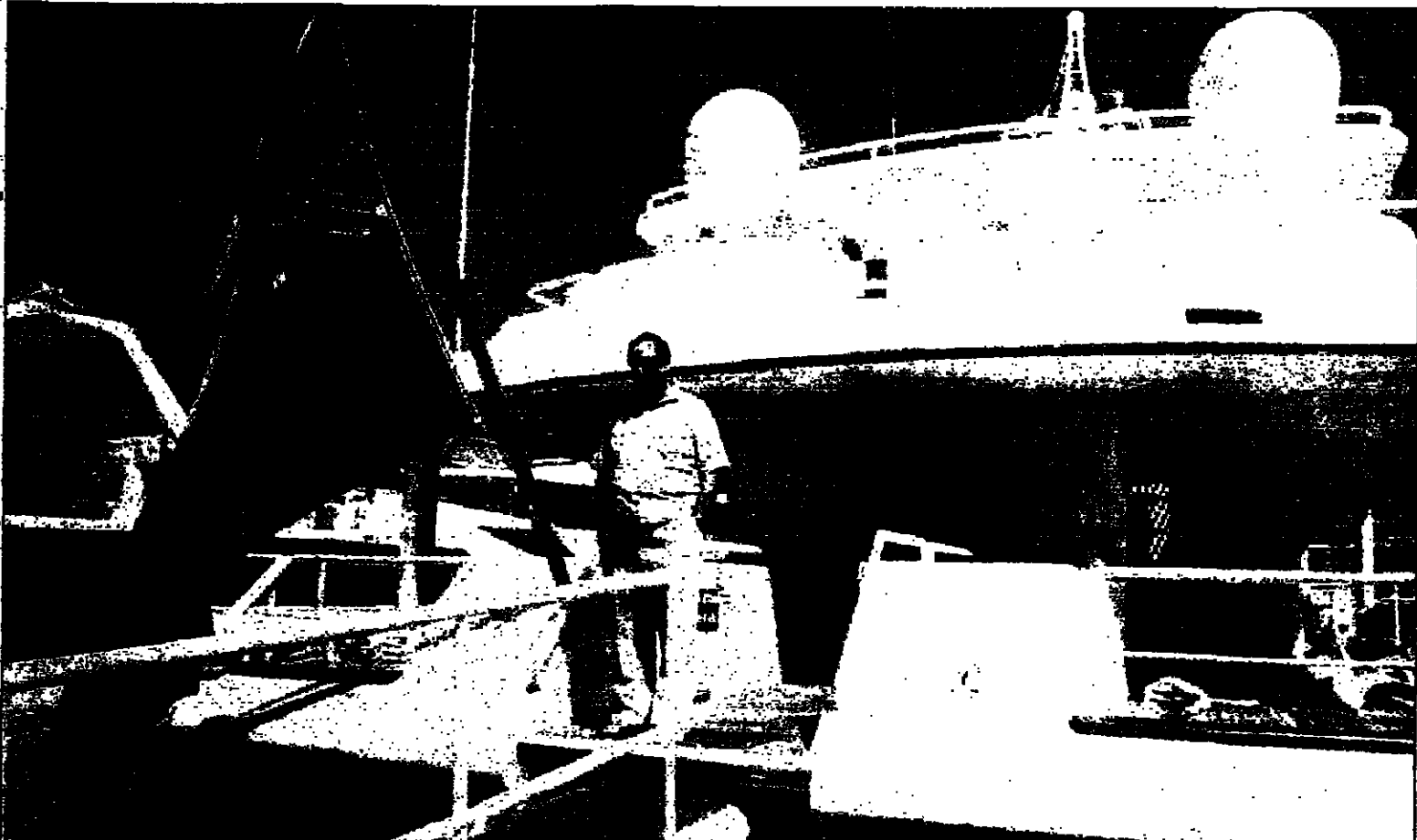
PATRONS of Christopher's restaurant are being forced to eat in the ground-floor café while the Covent Garden watering hole is undergoing a £250,000 make-over. Christopher Gilmour, the owner and son of Lord Gilmour, a former Secretary of State for Defence, hopes to have doubled the size of the restaurant by Easter. The top two levels will be more expensive, while the basement is being converted to a café/bar. "It will be more plush, but still with an American slant," says Gilmour. Could this be in anticipation of a Stock Market listing?

Branson bets

THOSE charitable players at City Index, the sports and financial bookmaker, have opened betting on the number of days Richard Branson will stay in the air. To thank Branson — in their "own small way" — for administering to their complaints last year after a miserable trip back from the Hong Kong Sevens rugby tournament, all profits will be sent to The Global Challenge's nominated charity. City Index's market opened at 13 to 15 days. "There were some big sellers, so faith isn't high," said a spokesman.

ARCHIE NORMAN does not appear to be putting up a strong fight against accusations that he is looking forward to his new role as a politician in order to enjoy more holiday. After setting off for a business meeting in Scotland yesterday, Norman was forced to cut it short, saying he had flu and needed to go home to bed.

MORAG PRESTON



Robert Maxwell aboard Lady Gaisline on which he made his last ill-fated voyage. His death spurred the demand for keyman insurance

Protection for high-flyers is a policy that makes good sense

Gavin Lumsden on the safety net offered to many businesses by keyman insurance

As he rose into the Moroccan skies yesterday aboard the Virgin Global Challenger balloon in his attempt to circumnavigate the world, Richard Branson left behind a business burdened with a £150,000 keyman insurance policy.

If disaster does strike on the 18-day flight Virgin will receive £30 million to compensate for his loss and to fund the search for a replacement. Adventurous business leaders like Mr Branson underline dramatically the need for companies to insure themselves against the risk of losing their high-flyers. Keyman insurance policies pay out a lump sum to businesses in much the same way that a life insurance policy pays out to families when a breadwinner dies. The level of premium depends on the sum assured and the age and health of the insured.

David Stirling, director at Crispin Speers & Partners, the specialist Lloyd's broker, says: "Although it sounds simple, keyman insurance is in fact a broad area with many different variations. It is useful to compare it with motor insurance, which varies according to the different speeds of cars, different drivers and whether or not they are kept in a garage."

Keyman insurance started in the US, but really began to take off in this country in the wake of Robert Maxwell's death, which devastated his Maxwell Communication Corporation empire. The recent death of Matthew Harding, chairman of the Benfield insurance group and vice-chairman of the Chelsea Football Club, has shown how sensible companies will always prepare for the worst. Mr Harding was insured for £30 million. And, indeed, it is his company that is sponsoring Mr Branson's challenge.

Virgin is unusual for a large company in its need for keyman insurance. Most of the demand comes from smaller companies. Many blue chips such as British Gas feel that they are robust enough to survive the unexpected demise of a director.

Given the fate of Mr Harding, who was killed when his helicopter crashed when he was returning from a football match, it is not surprising that many small companies seek to restrain the exuberance of their bosses. Carlton Cushnie, managing director of Versailles Group, the trade financier, who is insured for £5 million, was prevented from flying a Russian MIG fighter last year. "The board refused to let me go saying that I wouldn't be covered to fly such a powerful plane under the keyman policy."

Andrew Cook, chairman and chief executive of William Cook, the Sheffield engineering firm, has been insured for £5 million since 1986 when the company acquired Weir Foundries. The policy, which costs William Cook a £25,000 annual premium, is actually a condition of their lending bank. Mr Cook says: "All it means is if I get run over by a bus the company will get paid a lot of money. I can't do dangerous sports or bungee jumping or other stupid activities — it so happens that it's not my disposition so I don't mind."

Some companies feel they have outgrown the need for keyman insurance. DBS Management, the Huddersfield-based financial services company which floated on AIM last year, is a case in point. Although Ken Davy, its chief executive, has a 29.6 per cent holding there is no policy on him. Martin Greenwood says: "We have had such policies in the past, but as the company has grown, the necessity for keyman insurance has waned."

Corporate actions such as flotations, share issues or acquisitions frequently prompt companies to seek cover for key individuals such as finance directors.

Temporary cover between 6 and 18 months is often extended as companies realise the extent of their liability, says Brian Jackson of Cassidy Davis Life Syndicate. However, problems can arise if merchant bankers sponsoring corporate actions forget about insurance until the last minute. Many issues have been delayed by chief executives who dashed away from final negotiations to undergo medical tests.

And even in more relaxed times problems can crop up if egos are involved. Some individuals are not quite as important as they think they are, and going through a company's accounts to determine how much income a person generates is inevitably a long-winded process. Sometimes it's

not just a question of the company boss going missing. What if your entire staff wins the lottery and heads straight for the door?

Fielding Mann, the Leeds insurance broker, has come up with the solution — a maximum premium of £300 will insure up to 100 employees for £300,000. It has just introduced a keyman version, says Albert Robertson, a manager at the firm — so if your managing director wins a packet from his golf syndicate your company can still get a handout.

Robin Michaelson, director at Crow Life, an underwriting syndicate at Lloyds, which insured Mr Branson for a previous balloon flight, says that policies are usually linked to the length of the individual's contract and last up to ten years.

Most senior executives are not engaged in hazardous leisure pursuits, he says, and £1 million cover for a male non-smoker aged 45 starts at £1,880 a year, although the inclusion of critical illness or permanent disability cover can double this.

Brian Jackson of Cassidy Davis says hobbies such as flying need not make a policy prohibitive if the key player can prove he has good experience and does not do it very often.

For those smaller companies that do take out the policy it can be a lifesaver, and does not require the presence of a mini-Branson. One in three businesses will die or suffer a critical illness disability before retirement, even if they are not in the habit of reaching for the skies. Nevertheless, only 5 per cent of companies have this insurance, compared with 25 per cent in the United States. One firm was paid £300,000 when its managing director developed breast cancer. Another received £39,000 when its 43-year-old chief buyer suffered a heart attack.

For those smaller companies that do take out the policy it can be a lifesaver

Economic hangover turning an Asian tiger into a tortoise

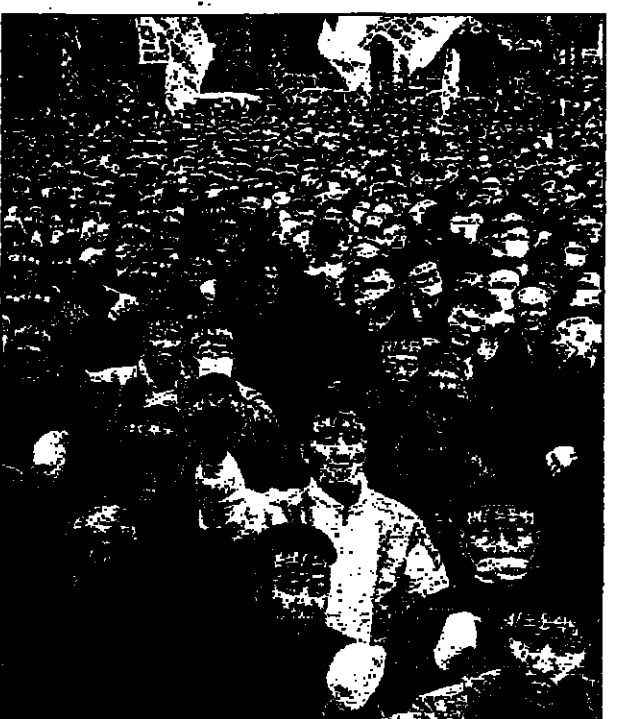
Oliver August on the problems sabotaging South Korea's boom

The South Korean economic miracle is blooming in Britain but wilting at home. The country is by far the biggest UK inward investor. Four of the top 20 foreign companies coming to Britain are from Korea with LG and Samsung, the industrial conglomerates, at number one and two on the list, having created tens of thousands of UK jobs in the 1990s.

The domestic Korean economy, however, is rapidly turning from an Asian tiger into a tortoise. The current account is showing an equivalent \$22 billion deficit, four times the original forecast. GDP growth dropped by more than 2 per cent last year and numbers for 1997 are again being revised downwards. "Korea has woken up with a hangover at the end of 1996. The economy isn't doing that great," said a senior foreign diplomat in Seoul.

For years, Western economists had been deeply impressed by the export-led Korean success story. While Europe and America were averaging growth rates around 2 per cent, Korea was expanding at four times the rate. Production and sales in electronics and car manufacturing were soaring. The doom-and-gloom merchants were convinced that the West would lose its economic dominance. The creation of a single European currency was interpreted as an attempt to build a unified front against the tiger economies.

But this no longer seems appropriate. Chinks in Korea's industrial armour have been exposed. The country's main problem is the inefficiency and low flexibility of its labour force. "The labour issue will be the most critical factor in our economy this year," said Sakong Eun-duk, senior economist at the Hanwha Economic Research Institute.



An anti-government protest by workers in Seoul yesterday

The problem is twofold. Salaries have been rising rapidly in recent years as workers demanded their share of the economic miracle. With the average wage equal to \$10,000 they could afford few of the goods they were producing so well. The resulting hike in labour costs meant that building new production facilities in Korea became less attractive. Instead, the Koreans came to Britain. Last autumn Hyundai revealed plans for a £2.4 billion semi-conductor plant in Scotland. The second aspect of Korea's labour force problem is inflexibility. The Korean economy is dominated by a small number

of conglomerates who offer their workers jobs for life. Competition between companies or employees is far from the norm.

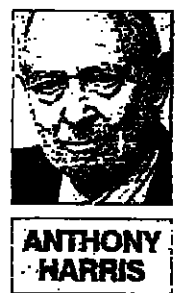
To fight the industrial malaise, the Korean Government has now introduced new labour laws undoing decades of near total job security by allowing employers to lay off workers, hire temporary staff and replace strikers.

These changes have sparked nationwide protests. The streets of Seoul have been filled with 200,000 striking workers, who have called for the removal of the government over this issue, and violent clashes with the police seem inevitable.

However, the strike action is only exacerbating Korea's problems. According to the trade ministry, the country has suffered \$1.4 billion in lost production since the strikes started on December 26.

Ironically, the labour dispute is good news for Britain. The trend of building Korean production sites is set to become even stronger. The more hostile the domestic climate, the more Korean companies will want to escape abroad.

One unwelcome feature of inward investment, however, is unlikely to change. The Department of Trade and Industry is paying substantial sweeteners to foreign investors. In many cases the DTI is involved in what amounts to an incentive contest with other European governments to convince the likes of Samsung to come to Britain. The demand for sweeteners will increase if troubles continue to mount on the Korean peninsula.



ANTHONY HARRIS

Our central bankers: an appreciation

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You will never see an advertisement like that because it would attract no applications. Yet although it is an accurate description of the lot of most central bankers, there are no unfilled vacancies in the world's great monetary authorities. It is a little like the Washington bureaucracy, which is equally underpaid. Result, as one official told me: "Most of the people you will meet will be nutty, or just plain stupid."

However, central bankers enjoy real power and some independence, so that warning needs rephrasing. Most of the people you meet are either friends of the President, or academics who know how the job should be done — until they try. All the same, it is quite surprising that they do not do worse.

Meanwhile they remain personally irreproachable (well, nearly always), public spirited, and generally nice people to know. Whatever you may read from me about their policies, I do like central bankers; which is more than I can say for politicians, as a class. And that, of course, is the real point of central bankers. Their function is to be not-politicians, and above all not facing elections. Most, all the way from hard money to expansionists, would agree that their job is not at heart technical but to resist financial debauchery, to represent the long term against the short.

That is why they tend to have tense relations with their political masters, or partners, where they have formal independence although this does not really matter much. It is also why so many are wedded to fixed targets or formulae: monetary growth, inflation objectives, or the exchange rate. Formulae, they believe, are more trustworthy than people. This, I believe, is mistaken, and does matter.

These reflections are provoked by some recent central banking appointments, and speeches by central bankers, all monitored by the indefatigable Stephen Lewis of London Bond Brokers. He notes friends of the President appearing in Washington and in Paris. In Washington, Alan Greenspan has become a friend of the President. The new arrivals will probably make no difference — unless, of course, something happens to disarrange the chairman's halo.

Proposals, for example, for a return to fixed rates are probably no more than an attempt to weaken Mr Greenspan's dominance.

Paris, though, could be quite a different matter. President Chirac said during his election campaign that monetary policy was too important to be left to monetary technocrats, and Mr Lewis reports that relations between M Chirac and Jean-Claude Trichet, the architect in charge of the franc fort, have remained chilly.

So the arrival of two Chirac cronies on the monetary council of the Bank of France could well disturb the icy consensus that has ruled there for so long — if not now then as the 1998 elections get nearer. That is a threat real enough to disturb the Bundesbank.

What worries Buba is a future that it may be unable to control, the policy of the European Central Bank. Hans Tietmeyer has proposed that the ECB should adopt the Bundesbank's current practice, M3 targeting. That does not look sensible: an M3 target is a kind of monetary Eurofighter, an inherently unstable system constrained by computers.

Buba has made of mess of it, just as the Bank of England once did. But it is there, which is really the point: it leaves little freedom to friends of any foreign President.

Buba distrusts not just politicians, but people. Overdoing it, surely.

WHAT'S A BOOK? EVERYTHING OR NOTHING THE EYE THAT SEES IT IS ALL

RAHUL WADGO EMERSON

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THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

Treasury launches drive to streamline PFI



Jack: focus on contract guidelines

A FRESH drive on the Private Finance Initiative, the Government's scheme to pump commercial cash into public projects, will be launched in the next couple of weeks by the Treasury, in a further effort to eliminate bureaucracy in the much-criticised programme.

Michael Jack, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, is expected soon to serve up the first major set of guidelines on the PFI for more than a year with the focus on contracts. Contractual hurdles

have been highlighted by many companies in their attacks on the PFI, which has been hindered by project delays.

The new pronouncement from the Treasury is likely to try to consolidate on the joint move by Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Confederation of British Industry to cut PFI red tape. It will be the first comprehensive set of guidelines since the 1995 Budget when the "private opportunity/public benefit" papers were

launched. In October, Mr Clarke and the CBI joined forces to revive the initiative, which had faced criticism from the CBI the previous summer. Then Mr Clarke said that the Government had learnt its lesson from industry.

Many construction and engineering groups have been harsh critics of the policy because of delays to some projects and the cost of bidding for work.

In its review, the CBI had said that PFI, which was launched in 1992,

was at a critical stage. In the joint government/industry endeavour, standardised contracts were launched and the Government pledged a case-by-case battle against heavy administration and any other problems.

The value of PFI contracts now stands at about £7.5 billion, with fresh figures due out at the end of next month. The Government is working towards a target of £14 billion by the year that ends in March 1999.

Linklaters double first in £1bn City fees league

BY ROBERT MILLER

THE CITY's top law firms advising on UK public takeovers earned record fees of about £300 million in 1996.

The latest annual league tables, published yesterday by *Acquisitions Monthly* magazine, show that Linklaters & Paines enjoyed a sparkling year, which saw the City collectively earn more than £1 billion in fees from UK takeovers. Linklaters not only topped the chart of lawyers working for banking teams or companies with 10 mandates worth £19 billion, but also topped the table for legal advisers to companies with 12 deals worth nearly £16 billion.

Philip Healey, editor of *Acquisitions Monthly*, said that the key to Linklaters' success was "its consistent involvement in £1 billion-plus deals". These included advising Royal Insurance on its £2.4 billion merger with Sun Alliance, and Lloyds TSB on its purchase of the outstanding 37.6 per cent stake in Lloyds Abbey Life, the insurer.

Slaughter and May retained its runner-up position in the table of law firms working for financial advisers or companies with 25 deals, the highest number achieved by any law firm during 1996, which were worth £16.3 bil-

lion. However, Slaughter & May, which acted for Midlands Electricity on its £1.7 billion takeover by General Public Utilities and Cinergy Corporation in the US, fell from first to third place, behind Allen & Overy, in the table of legal advisers to companies.

The law firm that moved furthest and fastest up the tables was Ashurst Morris Crisp. It soared from 13th to fourth place in the main table, with 15 deals totalling £9 billion, and from 11th to fifth in the other.

Freshfields, which topped the 1995 tables with 31 deals totalling £32.2 billion, slipped slightly to the number three and number four spots respectively.

Mr Healey said: "The increasing complexity of deals meant that last year was even better than 1995 in terms of boosting the coffers of the leading law firms." He added: "The combination of no mega-bids and fewer £1 billion-plus mandates was sufficient to cut back overall deal values in 1996, but lawyers can still look back on the year with some satisfaction. Moreover, the current boom in UK mergers and acquisitions augurs well for 1997."



Celebrating a £5 billion record: Bruce Burnett and Alan Palmer, marketing directors of Trebor Bassett and Cadbury

Sweet success for Dairy Milk

BY SARAH CUNNINGHAM

BRITONS are munching their way through 12 per cent more chocolates and sweets than ten years ago with children and the middle-aged the biggest consumers.

Figures released yesterday by Cadbury Schweppes show that British sales grew 5 per cent last year to a record £4.9 billion and that the UK is the world's third largest consumer of chocolate and sweets,

with people eating 13 kilograms per year and spending an average £1.60 each per week. We trail only Denmark (17kg per person) and Ireland (14kg).

The nation's favourite chocolate, according to the annual confectionery review from Cadbury, is its own Dairy Milk, while the top selling

sweet brand is Wrigley's Extra chewing gum. The most popular chocolate bar was Kit Kat, and Maltesers topped the bag league.

The 45-64 age group buys the most confectionery at 23 per cent of the total. They also eat more — 17 per cent — than any other group except the under-eighties (19 per cent). Chocolate continues to make

up most of the confectionery market with 70 per cent of sales.

Cadbury holds a 20 per cent share of the total confectionery market and Trebor Bassett, the group's sweet manufacturing arm, 10 per cent. This compares with Nestlé Rowntree (20 per cent) and Mars (18 per cent).

Kawasaki joins R-R in Trent 900 project

ROLLS-ROYCE'S programme to make the engines that will power the new 600-seater superjumbos being developed by Boeing and Airbus has been joined by Kawasaki. The Japanese group is the first company to become a risk and revenue partner in the Trent 900 programme launched at last year's Farnborough Air Show. Rolls-Royce has agreements with Boeing and Airbus, which are working on different designs for the large-capacity aircraft, for its engines.

Kawasaki Heavy Industries, which has joined other Rolls-Royce ventures, will take on 6 per cent share of the risks in the 900 project in return for 6 per cent of the rewards and will focus on design and manufacture of the turbine. Rolls-Royce is in talks with other aerospace groups for further risk and revenue partnerships. It is expected that it will take those partnerships to 24 per cent of the project in line with its other engine developments.

Reed grows in France

THE French subsidiary of Reed-Elsevier, the Anglo-Dutch publishing group, yesterday purchased La Documentation Organique, the publisher of a tax-law encyclopaedia for accountants and companies. The purchase price was not disclosed but was said to be small. La Documentation Organique has 29 employees and expects turnover for 1996 of FF19.3 million, or less than £2.2 million. Reed said that the takeover will raise the annual turnover of its French legal publishing operations to about FF120 million.

Tandem chief resigns

TANDEM GROUP, the bicycle maker, yesterday announced the resignation of Robin Garland as chief executive. His departure comes after last year's agreed merger with Cusker and withdrawal from the manufacture, distribution and retailing of garden leisure and horticultural products. The company said that Mr Garland would continue to advise the board on the group's withdrawal from clothing operations, which is now almost complete. Graham Widdowson continues as chairman with a new operational board created from the senior management of the bicycle businesses.

Chips market declines

WORLDWIDE semiconductor revenues fell 7 per cent to \$141 billion in 1996, according to Dataquest, the market research firm, after a steep drop in the market for dynamic random access memory (DRAM) chips, the most common computer memory chip. The average selling price for DRAMs fell by three quarters, Dataquest said. Excluding DRAMs, the semiconductor market grew 6 per cent, led by a 14 per cent microcomponent revenue growth. Intel Corp remained the world's leading chip producer, with 29 per cent revenue growth.

EU seeks bank facts

THE European Commission has told France to give details of its latest bail-out plan for state-owned Credit Lyonnais. The Commission, which says it has had no contact with the French authorities since emergency measures were approved in September, is writing "to demand urgent communication of these details". The Commission allowed emergency finance of FF3.9 billion to enable the bank to issue delayed interim results showing a small profit of FF7 million, but complained that Paris had not respected a reporting condition of a past rescue.

Hays wins S&N deal

HAYS, the business services group, has won a £20 million contract to become the sole logistics supplier for the take-home drink products of Scottish & Newcastle. Hays, which already distributes around half of the brewer's take-home volumes, will take full command of the new contract from the end of next month. Ronnie Frost, executive chairman of Hays, said that the new contract would provide significant opportunities for improving efficiency. At one stage yesterday shares in Hays fell 2p, to 54 1/2p.

Japan merger relaxation

JAPAN'S fair trade watchdog hopes to ease rules for mergers, which could pave the way for big corporate tie-ups and strengthen companies' global competitiveness. The Fair Trade Commission (FTC) said it may simplify procedures by allowing certain mergers to be conducted without the need for watchdog approval. This would involve dropping application requirements for mergers between small companies with total assets of less than 10 billion yen (£51.24 million) each, as well as for those within the same corporate group.

Buyout at Merrychef

MERRYCHEF, the designer and manufacturer of commercial microwave ovens based in Hampshire, has been acquired by its management team. The company, which has been trading since 1945, employs 70 people and has a customer base which includes supply contracts with Scottish & Newcastle, Bass Taverns, Granada, Rank, Tesco, J Sainsbury and City Centre Restaurants. The management is led by Reece Houghton, with funding led by 3i, who invested £7.3 million. Senior debt and banking facilities have been provided by Bank of Scotland.

Try Group optimistic

TRY GROUP, the contractor and housebuilder, expects to meet its forecasts for 1996 and sees promising signs for 1997, the company said yesterday. The contracting order book was boosted by £35 million in the final six weeks of last year, now stands at £110 million. The disposal of Try's plant hire subsidiary and the favourable timing of some payments meant that Try had net cash of £5.5 million at the year end. New homes in two sites in London are selling more quickly than budgeted. Try shares rose 3 1/2p to 16 1/2p yesterday.

Gartland Whalley & Barker to plant seed of US growth

BY MARTIN BARROW

GARTLAND Whalley & Barker, the fast-growing venture capital business managed by former senior executives of FKI, plans to establish a parallel business in America.

Tony Gartland, chairman, said America represented the next major stage of growth for the group, enabling it to invest in businesses at an early stage of their development.

GWB, which gained a listing on the Alternative Investment Market in August after the reverse takeover of Select Industries, yesterday reported a 20 per cent rise in the value of investments to £57.4 million for the year to October 31.

Pre-tax profits increased to £12.7 million, from £5.5 million in the previous 12 months, and earnings more than trebled to 11.07p a share (3.07p). GWB, which functioned as a public company for only the final seven weeks of the financial year, recommends a dividend of 0.32p a share. This dividend will be the first received by Select shareholders since 1988. Mr Gartland said GWB had made an even stronger start to

the current financial year. The flotation of Aquarius Group, a designer of household accessories, valued shares and warrants held by GWB at £21.6 million at December 20, a surplus of £14.6 million over original cost.

Mr Gartland, whose fellow directors include Jeff Whalley and Lord King, said the company proposed to increase dividends at a faster rate than earnings. The shares rose 8p to a new high of 104 1/2p.



Gartland: dividend growth

Scottish Equitable evaluation after £2bn deal

Insurers' credit status reviewed

BY ADAM JONES

THE credit-worthiness of Scottish Equitable's life insurance operation is to be reviewed by Moody's, the international rating agency.

The reassessment of the financial strength rating, with a view to downgrading, follows the £2 billion purchase of a life insurer in the US by Aegon, Scottish Equitable's Dutch parent company. The purchase of the insurance operations of Provident, announced last week, will involve Aegon taking on about £500 million of debt.

Moody's currently gives Scottish Equitable a financial

strength rating — a measure of a company's ability to pay long-term liabilities — of Aaa. This is two grades short of the top rating of Aaa.

A spokesman for Scottish Equitable said: "Any large transaction triggers an automatic evaluation of all the group's companies. We can just put it down to that."

He said that he was bemused by any assumption that downgrading was likely. Moody's is also reviewing Norwich Union's rating in case demutualisation increases borrowings.

Yesterday, Moody's also published a general report on the UK life insurance indus-

try. It said that life insurance companies may find their high credit ratings lowered by increasing competition.

The bad image of the industry and the difficulty of generating capital from operations are also putting pressure on credit ratings, it found.

However, the financial strength of insurance companies was stable in 1996, according to an assessment of 19 companies. Their ratings range from Aaa, awarded to Prudential Assurance and Standard Life Assurance, to A3, awarded to the Scottish Provident and Eagle Star Life Assurance.

In spite of the prospect of a

shakeout prompted by increased competition, Mark Oldcorn, a Moody's analyst, said that the industry as a whole experienced a reversal of fortune in 1996. "Sales have improved from 1995, which was a very difficult year after the mis-selling," he said.

The report said that improvements in investment markets had combined with the increase in new business to brighten the outlook. Much of the new business may not, however, be profitable, it said, since some insurers were cutting costs aggressively to squeeze smaller companies. A bear market could also shrink life offices' capitalisation.

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Bonds drag equities lower

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ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES			
Company	Price	Change	%
...
BANKS			
Company	Price	Change	%
...
BREWERIES, PUBS & REST			
Company	Price	Change	%
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DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS			
Company	Price	Change	%
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BUILDING & CONSTRUCT			
Company	Price	Change	%
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ELECTRICITY			
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ELECTRONIC & ELECT			
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ENGINEERING VEHICLES			
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FOOD MANUFACTURERS			
Company	Price	Change	%
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HEALTHCARE			
Company	Price	Change	%
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HOUSEHOLD GOODS			
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INSURANCE			
Company	Price	Change	%
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INVESTMENT TRUSTS			
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BRITISH FUNDS									
1996/7			Price		Est. Rd %		1996/7		
High	Low	Close	£	p	+	-	High	Low	Close
SHORTS (under 5 years)									
100%	100%	100%	100%	6.48	6.48				
100%	100%	100%	100%	5.32	5.32				
100%	100%	100%	100%	6.41	6.41				
100%	100%	100%	100%	5.40	5.40				
100%	100%	100%	100%	6.47	6.47				
100%	100%	100%	100%	7.28	7.28				
100%	100%	100%	100%	5.82	5.82				
100%	100%	100%	100%	6.46	6.46				
100%	100%	100%	100%	5.44	5.44				
100%	100%	100%	100%	6.06	6.06				
100%	100%	100%	100%	5.48	5.48				
100%	100%	100%	100%	6.15	6.15				
100%	100%	100%	100%	6.48	6.48				
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PREVIEW
From Felicity Kendal, starring at the Old Vic in a new staging of Granville-Barker's *Waste*...



PREVIEW
...and Val Kilmer, playing Leslie Charteris's smooth detective in a new big-screen version of *The Saint*...

THE TIMES ARTS



PREVIEW
...to the Royal Ballet's staging of Twyla Tharp's *Push Comes to Shove* at Covent Garden...



PREVIEW
...and a batch of concerts marking Schubert's bicentenary: *Times* critics choose the top spring shows

Braque at the Royal Academy, Kenneth Branagh's *Hamlet*: *Times* critics pick the hottest tickets ahead

Shows that bloom in the spring

Richard Cork
Despite his outstanding contribution to 20th-century painting, Georges Braque has always suffered in comparison with the overwhelming fame of his friend Picasso. Only now is the Royal Academy staging the first British exhibition to examine his later work (Jan 23-April 6). Key loans from collections across the world will reveal how the older Braque created a lyrical and mysterious world, especially in his culminating series based on the theme of the artist's studio.

But British art will not be neglected in 1997. At the National Gallery, the precocity of the young Gainsborough is surveyed (Jan 29-March 31). Less well-known paintings will extend our knowledge of an artist whose early work is often effortlessly beguiling.

Paula Rego, by contrast, took a long time to arrive at her present reputation. Born in Lisbon and trained at the Slade School in London, she explored a remarkable range of styles before defining her mature identity. The full variety of Rego's work, from 1959 to 1995, will be displayed for the first time at the Tate Liverpool (Feb 8-April 13). Even her best-known later works will be seen in a new light, with the help of preparatory drawings never exhibited before.

The astonishing vitality of British art before the First World War is explored in a major exhibition at the Barbican Art Gallery (Feb 20-May 26). Young artists in London were stimulated by the daring of continental movements, and the Barbican show will display Cézanne, Gauguin, Picasso and Matisse alongside home-grown work by David Bomberg, Wyndham Lewis, Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant.

During the same period, the German painter Lovis Corinth underwent a momentous change. In the late 19th century he had pioneered Impressionism in his own country, but in middle age his style moved towards a far more powerful form of Expressionism. His long and turbulent career will be explored in a large Tate Gallery retrospective (Feb 20-May 4).

Devotees of photography are bound to savour the August Sander exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery (Feb 28-June 8). Now considered a towering figure in the history of German photography, Sander was born in 1876. But he only achieved greatness from the 1920s onwards, after starting an immensely ambitious project called "People of the Twentieth Century". The 200 images in this new show all come from Sander's own collection.

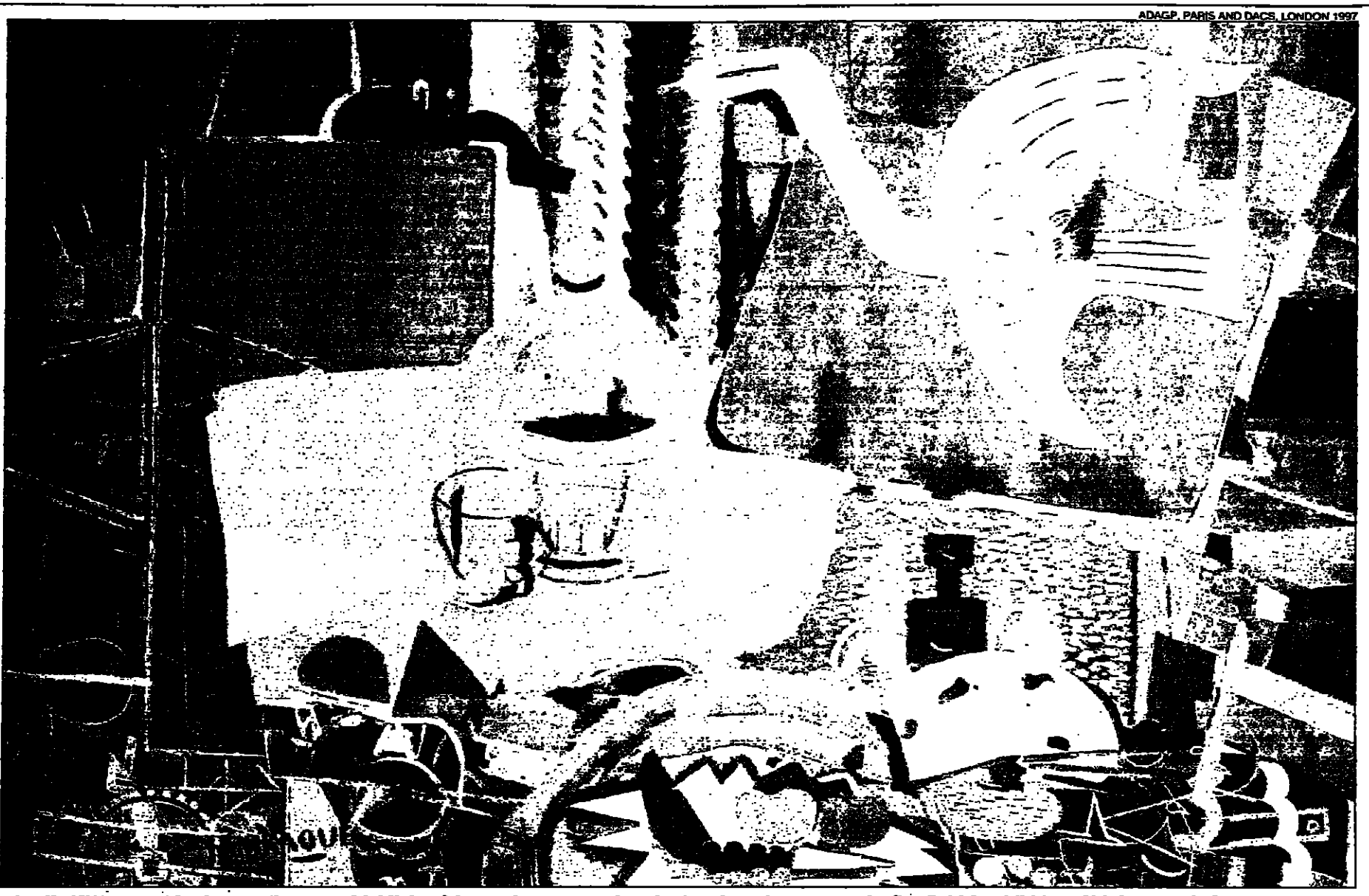
If Sander's work only achieved international fame after his death in 1964, Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema looked in enormous popularity during his lifetime. Modernists despised him for many years, but the large retrospective at the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool (March 21-June 3) reflects a recent revival of interest in his languorous Mediterranean idylls.

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Studio VIII (1954-55) by Georges Braque, a highlight of the coming season when the Royal Academy stages the first British exhibition of his later work (from January 23)

English National Ballet says farewell to the Festival Hall next week after more than 40 years of performances on the South Bank. The company, which moves its London seasons to the Coliseum later this year, is bowing out with Ronald Hynd's fine staging of *Coppelia* (from Monday). There are plenty of new ENB dancers to catch up with, including the popular Hungarian Zoltan Solymosi (you may remember him from *Covent Garden*). Meanwhile, ENB's spring tour (opening Feb 17 at the Palace Theatre, Manchester) features the first performances by an English company of Balanchine's *Who Cares?*

One of the most successful ballets of the Seventies makes its way to Covent Garden on February 13 when the Royal Ballet brings Twyla Tharp's *Push Comes to Shove* into the repertoire. Tharp made the one-act in 1976 for the extraordinary Mikhail Baryshnikov,

Debra Craine
this time around it's the Royal's Tetsoya Kimaakawa wearing the bowler hat. On April 30 Glen Tetley unravels his new ballet for Covent Garden, his first commission for the Royal since his *Dances of Albion* in 1980. No details are available yet, except that Nadine Baylis will be doing the designs. On a smaller scale, Dance Bites sees the Royal touring a programme of short works by Matthew Hart, Tom Sapsford, William Tuckett, Cathy Marston, Christopher Wheelton and Ashley Page (opens at the Lyceum in Sheffield on March 3).

MacMillan's Mahler ballet *Song of the Earth* enters the Birmingham Royal Ballet repertoire in Birmingham (Feb 25 at the Hippodrome) before going out on tour. A new work by Lila York is

premiered at the Mayflower in Southampton on May 15, and comes to the Royal Opera House as part of BRB's last season there before closure (season opens June 9).

Rambert Dance Company performs work by the artistic director Christopher Bruce on its current tour, including Bruce's latest *Stream*. Adventures in Motion Pictures, still enjoying the triumph of its West End run of *Swan Lake*, celebrates its tenth anniversary on February 25 at the Place with a revival of Matthew Bourne's witty take on *La Sylphide*, *Highland Fling*. Scottish Ballet opens Woking's second Dance Umbrella festival with the "real" *La Sylphide*, courtesy of Bournonville (Feb 25, New Victoria Theatre); while Philippe Decouflé, the man who choreographed the opening and closing ceremonies of the 1992 Winter Olympics, brings his dazzling new show *Decoder* to Woking (March 6-8).

MUSIC
Richard Morrison
How could our musical life survive without its anniversaries? This spring there is hardly a concert that isn't marking somebody's birth, death or barmitzvah.

Schubert, born 200 years ago, takes centre stage at the Wigmore Hall, where Andras Schiff leads a gala on the birthday (Jan 31), then begins a Schubert piano cycle (from Feb 5). Jan Bostredt, the upwardly-mobile tenor, tours Schubert's *Winterreise*. And the violinist Gidon Kremer couples Schubert with Schubert-inspired new music in a series (Jan 20, March 7, April 7) that the Barbican shares with Cologne, Paris and Amsterdam.

The London Symphony Orchestra offers buckets of Brahms at the Barbican (from Jan 29): the old boy died 100 years ago. And later the LSO alights on — guess what? — another Significant Date. Mstislav Rostropovich will be 70, so the great cellist's life, virtuosity and

idiosyncratic conducting are celebrated with a Barbican series from March 8.

Julian Bream has discovered that it is 50 years since he first strummed a guitar in public. This, too, produces a concert (Queen Elizabeth Hall, Jan 16). The Halle Orchestra has discovered John Adams's 50th birthday, so the American minimalist-with-romantic tendencies is invited to Manchester to conduct his new work (Jan 23).

There are also ongoing celebrations of the millennium. Simon Rattle's ten-year *Towards the Millennium* series has reached the music of the Sixties. He launches this instalment with a Henze/Stravinsky concert (Birmingham Feb 27, Festival Hall Feb 28). This must not be confused with the BBC's

Sounding the Century series, which opens with a barrage of Stravinsky (including a televised event on Feb 16 conducted by Boulez), and runs to 1999.

What doesn't mark an anniversary? Well, the celebrations in Belfast are all about the new Waterfront Hall: the Ulster Orchestra shares the inaugural festival (from Jan 17) with the St Petersburg Philharmonic. The London Sinfonietta offers a crash course in new British music (South Bank, Feb 15-16). The BBC Symphony Orchestra presents a similarly intense weekend devoted to the late, moderately great Polish composer Witold Lutoslawski (Barbican, Jan 7-9).

James MacMillan's Clarinet Concerto is premiered by the Royal Scottish National Orchestra (Glasgow, April 5). And, for those who like slightly older sounds, Cambridge (Jesus College) and Bristol (St George's) are sharing a Medieval Music Festival (March 6-9).

Benedict Nightingale
Exit the RSC, re-enter the RSC's founder. The company quits the Barbican for six months in early April, by which time it will have transferred three more of last season's Stratford offerings to the Pit, prime among them *Three Hours After Marriage*, a farcical portrait of 18th-century marital manners by Pope, Gay and Arbuthnot (Jan 28). But at least we will have compensation in the form of Sir Peter Hall's first season at the Old Vic.

This opens with Granville-Barker's *Waste* (March 14), in which Michael Pennington's senior politician is ruined by a dangerous liaison with Felicity Kendal. Then come a revival of *Cloud Nine* (March 20), Caryl Churchill's satirical look at prudery and sexual confusion, and *Hurlyburly* (March 24), David Rabe's Hollywood baroque.

At the National the major events are a revival of Flaxler's dinky hilarious *Homecoming* (Jan 23); the Ian Holm *King Lear* (March 27); a staging of Brecht's *Caucasian Chalk Circle* by Theatre de Complicité; Simon McBurney (April 18); and Maria Friedman in Gershwin and Weill's *Lady in the Dark* (March 11).

Elsewhere in the non-profit-making sector, the Almeida offers Ralph Fiennes in Chekhov's *Ivanov* (Feb 19); Max Stafford-Clark's admirable Out

of Joint company comes to Hampstead with a play about emotional chaos among social workers and men's groups, April de Angelis's *Positive Hour* (March 4); the Theatre Royal at Stratford East, plays host to maybe the best play yet about Asians in Britain, Ayub Khan-Din's *East is East* (Feb 5); and the Royal Court presents Doug Lucie's doubtless scathing attack on media moguls, *The Shallow End*, at the Duke of York's (Feb 17).

The West End picture is less certain. The hugely admired Schmitzler-derived musical *Romance*, *Romance* may hit the Gielgud in early March, but the big event looks like being Stephen Churchill's *Tom and Clem* (April 9). This brings Michael Gambon and Alec McCowen to the Aldwych as the maverick MP Tom Driberg and his long-suffering leader, Clement Attlee.

And let's not forget Cliff Richard and Emily Brontë. The singing knight arrives in and as *Heathcliff* at Labatt's Apollo on February 12 after a four-month tour that has inexplicably bypassed Stratford, Nottingham, Cambridge and Glasgow. Still, those burghs can take solace in the prospect of irrefragable Tennessee Williams's surreal *Casino Real* (Feb 27), a co-production with the National Theatre of Uganda's *Uganda's Mother Courage* (April 29), the premiere of Ariel Dorfman's *Widows* (March 3), and *Babes in the Wood* (March 3), the Tron Theatre's adaptation of Armin's *Maupin's Tales of the City* (Jan 25).



Stand by in February for Kenneth Branagh's four-hour *Hamlet* and Jane Campion's *The Portrait of a Lady*

The play's the thing this winter, with various new movie adaptations of Shakespeare to add to those already out and about. Al Pacino gets in first (Jan 31) with his directorial debut *Looking for Richard*, a lively, fast-paced piece that dovetails filmed scenes from *Richard III* with a comic record of the struggles in bringing the Bard to life for audiences and actors today. His colleagues include Alec Baldwin (Clarence) and Winona Ryder (Lady Anne).

Two weeks later Kenneth Branagh weighs in with his ambitious, four-hour *Hamlet*, aimed at the mainstream audiences who enjoyed his *Much Ado About Nothing*. Every word and comma of the Shakespeare text is filmed in Branagh's usual eclectic, ritzy manner, in a 19th-century setting. Every living actor is also present, from Billy Crystal (First Gravedigger) to John Mills (Old Norway). Branagh, hair coloured a Nordic blond, is the troubled Prince; Julie Christie is Gertrude, and Derek Jacobi Claudius.

After six weeks' respite, *Romeo and Juliet* gets the shock treatment in an electric film by Baz Luhrmann, the

CINEMA
Geoff Brown
Australian director of *Strictly Ballroom*. Forget Shakespeare's Verona: this version takes place in Verona Beach, where the accent is strongly American, and young actors like Leonardo DiCaprio (Romeo) and Claire Danes (Juliet) seem right at home.

The classic novel is not forgotten. Jane Campion's version of *The Portrait of a Lady* opens on February 28. This is no pretty costume drama: in her first film since *The Piano*, Campion sculpts icy elegant and mysterious images to tell Henry James's story about an independent-minded American woman sucked into marriage in Europe. Nicole Kidman is admirable as Isobel Archer; her eventual husband is played by John Malkovich, quirks well to the fore.

After all this culture, though, you must be starving for a Hollywood kess-up. How about *The Saint*, directed by Philip Noyce, with Val Kilmer, a big-screen revival of Leslie Charteris's

debonair detective portrayed on television by Roger Moore? This arrives in March. Or if you prefer your heroes from pulp fiction and comic strips, that crime-fighting phenomenon *The Phantom* swirls into cinemas on February 14 in the form of Billy Zane. The connoisseur's choice, though, will probably be *Mars Attacks!*, the latest hymn to American lowbrow culture from director Tim Burton. His subject here is the Fifties alien invasion movie, and he recreates the genre with some spiffing designs, tongue firmly in cheek, and an astonishing roster of star names, starting with Jack Nicholson (the US President, no less) and ending with Tom Jones.

Foreign-language films are thin on the ground, but France supplies two genuine pleasures. On February 7, Patrice Leconte's diverting costume piece *Ridicule* makes its bow: prepare for dry, witty dialogue, and piles of intrigue at the Court of Versailles. Then, way into the future in early April, comes Jacques Audiard's *A Simple Plan*, a captivating comic tale of deception during the Second World War.

OPERA
John Allison
The single outstanding operatic event is the first professional staging in Britain of *Pales-trina* at Covent Garden. Hans Pfitzner's stirring "musical legend" is much talked-about but little known: it hymns the sacred power of music to save a declining culture — lofty subject-matter, for which Nikolaus Lehnhoff is probably the right producer. Too many distinguished singers to list, but Nicolai Gedda's appearance in a cameo role suggests the level of casting to expect (opens Jan 28).

The Royal Opera has saved the season's best revivals for now, and none is more excitingly cast than *Lohengrin* (Feb 8), with Karita Mattila, matchless in this repertoire, Gösta Winbergh, Sergei Leiferkus and the veteran Gwyneth Jones.

English National Opera's hot ticket is likely to be a new production of

Gluck's *Orpheus and Eurydice* by the director-choreographer Martha Clarke, conducted by Jane Glover (March 3). Michael Chance and Lesley Garrett take the title roles. Della Jones replaces the originally announced Sally Burgess as the shipwrecked Isabella in the new *Italian Girl in Algiers* (Jan 18).

Patrice Caurier and Moshe Leiser will stage *Carmen* for Welsh National Opera (Feb 15); with a cast including Sara Fulgoni and Edmund Barham it should be seen. Scottish Opera's new *Fledermaus* (Glasgow, Feb 12) features a lively cast, and Giles Havergal's production is promised as being slap bang in the opera's frothy period. Two of the greatest Italian operas reach Opera North in new stagings: *Falstaff* (Jan 16) and *The Return of Ulysses* (April 15). Back in London, *Carmen* is at the Albert Hall (Feb 6). Having apparently learnt from the mistakes of his *Bohème* last year, Raymond Gubbay has now hired a better production team.

St. John's, Smith Square, SW1 Wed 8 January 7.30pm
ROSALIND PLOWRIGHT soprano
JULIAN LLOYD WEBBER tenor
YOSHINOBU KURIBAYASHI baritone
SHUNTARO SATO conductor
ENGLISH CHAMBER ORCHESTRA • TALLIS CHAMBER CHOIR
Programme includes works by
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CHOICE 1

Countertenor in the spotlight
Michael Chance shows his range

VENUE: Tonight (6pm) at the Wigmore Hall



CHOICE 2

Conductor Mark Wigglesworth offers a concert of Lutoslawski

VENUE: Today (1.05pm) at St David's Hall, Cardiff

THE TIMES ARTS



CHOICE 3

Verdi on the road: La traviata comes to Guildford

VENUE: Until Saturday at the Yvonne Arnaud



VISUAL ART

Work by Tony Oursler and others goes on board a new cruise ship with a difference

LONDON

ALL OF YOU MINE The Bush Theatre reports after a five-month rehearsal with a world premiere. Written by Dennis Potter Award-winner Richard Cawston, whose previous Bush productions include *Pond Life* and *The Moral Ash*, *All of You Mine* is a bittersweet comedy about a family's shared secret in a Yorkshire mining community. Simon Lusher directs. Bush, Shepherd Bush Green, W12 (0181-743 3355). Preview tonight and tomorrow. 8pm. Open Friday, 7pm. Then Mon-Sat, 8pm. Until February 8.

THE ART OF ILLUSTRATION The Guildenstern Gallery is staging an exhibition to coincide with the Folio Society's 50th anniversary, featuring 50 of the best artists for the Folio Society's prize to illustrate a literary classic. Including Edgar Allan Poe's *Tales of Mystery and Imagination*, and Kafka's *Metamorphosis*. Royal College of Art, Kensington Road, SW7 (0171-593 4444). Daily, 10am-6pm. Until January 16.

WIGMORE DOUBLE Today's Rush Hour concert at 6pm is given by Michael Chance, countertenor, and Julius Drake, piano. The programme includes Tappin's *Songs for David*, Britten's *A Shropshire Lad*, and High Windows by Powers. At 8pm, the Keller Quartet.

THE ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN Touching and convincing adaptation of Mark Twain's masterpiece. Lovely pair of central performances, and good playing up and down the river. Greenways, Grooms Hill, SE10 (0181-858 7755). Mon-Sat, 7.45pm, mat Sat, 2.30pm. Until January 25.

THE BEAUTY OF THE BEAST Laurence Boveld directs this year's Christmas show, with marionettes and automatic clapping the Beast's partner, Young Wic. The Cat, SE1 (0171-828 6363). Various times, 10.30am, 1.30pm, 2.30pm, 7pm. Until February 1.

THE BEAUTY QUEEN OF LESBIAN Quick review to Martin McDonagh's well-crafted and gripping drama of love lost in Connemara. A change of cast brings the story in as the frustrated daughter to Anna. Maudslayi, Garry Hynes directs. Royal Court (Duke of York's), St Martin's Lane, WC2 (0171-555 5000). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm; mat Sat, 3.30pm.

BEEP, NO CHICKEN Derek Walcott's 1970s poem, set in Trinidad where a new money movement, Cato Hoger's Auto-Repairs and Authentic Rob Shop, Yvonne Brumby directs. Theatrical, 200 High Road, NW6 (0171-328 1000). Mon-Sat, 8pm, mat Wed (Jan 22, 25), 2pm, Sat, 4pm.

NEW RELEASES

SHINE (12) Child prodigy pianist crumples under the strain. Lifting, often funny treatment of a true story from Australian director Scott Helman. Barcon (0171-538 8811). Chelsea (0171-351 3142). Clapham (0171-458 3323). Curzon (0171-458 3323). Galle (0171-727 4043). Odeon: Haymarket (01426-915 353). Kensington (01426-915 353). Richmond (0181-332 0030). Ritz (0171-737 2121). Screen/88 (0171-435 3368). Warner (0171-437 4343).

SLIPPER (15) Helium school musical. Average theme on an impressive cast (Kevin Bacon, Brad Pitt, Robert De Niro, David Byrne). ABC Baker Street (0171-455 9772). Clapham Picture House (0171-458 3323). Odeon: Kensington (01426-915 353). Marble Arch (01426-915 353). Screen/88 (0171-435 3368). Warner (0171-437 4343).

CURRENT

BRASSERD (15) Yorkshire colliery band fights for survival. Sugary

TODAY'S CHOICE

A daily guide to arts and entertainment, compiled by Gillian Mawzy

ELSEWHERE

BIRMINGHAM Lawrence Foster conducts the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra in Weber's *Symphony No. 1*. 7.30pm. The Royal College of Art, Kensington Road, SW7 (0171-593 4444).

BRIGHTON

Holiday on ice celebrates its 50th anniversary by looking back over the past half century, and forward to an imagined future. Brighton Centre (01273 320811). Sat, 2pm, 5pm, 8pm, Sun, 10.30am, 2pm, 5pm. Tue-Thurs, 2pm; Fri, 7.30pm.

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Upon a painted ocean

VISUAL ART: Masters are not confined to the bridge of the liner *Galaxy*, Guy Walters writes

Works of art in restaurants tend to go unnoticed. Proprietors, in their bid to add a touch of class, often slap up some vast abstract canvas in order to impress the diners, but Sir and Madam don't really care, so long as the food is as good as it is expensive and there is something to occupy their minds. So what better way to spend a few hours than surveying some fine works of art?

If you sailed on *Celebrity Cruises'* new ship *Galaxy*, your tour of inspection would take a long time indeed. Weighing 77,500 tonnes, the recently completed *Galaxy* contains 450 works valued at about £2 million. According to the brochure, this is "the finest collection of contemporary art exhibited aboard a cruise ship". Apparently "nothing compares to the *Galaxy's* Art Collection".

Can this be true? There are certainly some big names represented on board. Koons, Beuys, Johns, Rauschenberg and Lichtenstein all rub frames in the *Galaxy's* Trump Tower-meets-car-showroom splendour. There are also some sturdy middleweights — Georg Baselitz, Polly Apfelbaum, Sean Landers and Jack Pierson. Turnover in the somewhat obscure German works, mostly abstract and useful for filling the odd blank space.

Surprisingly, many of the works are first-rate. It would be easy to expect a cargo of pieces chosen for their appeal to the bauble-laden Las Vegas set, but the Rauschenberg is a pleasant intaglio, the Koons is a typically naïf statue

of a white terrier, the Beuys a simple woodcut and the Johns a joyously squiggly lithograph. The Lichtensteins are disappointing. Being recent, they are fairly dreary and predictable, but they look fine for a cruise ship.

However, many of the pieces are let down by the *Galaxy's* upholstery. The carpets are largely Dayglo and hallucinogenic, clashing sensationally with some of the most colourful pieces and more or less murdering the subtle. Art doesn't have to be hung on white walls, but many of the pieces on the *Galaxy* would benefit from being so.

The collection was assembled by Christina Chandris, the wife of the company's chairman. She had the enviable task of jettisoning New York and London to snap up what she saw fit. "I tried to take into account the environment in which I hung things," she says. "I didn't want the pictures fighting with the ship." It is debatable whether she succeeded.

Security does not seem to be a particular concern, presumably on the ground that if a picture goes missing, the suspects can all be marooned at sea until the culprit is found.

Bearing in mind her likely "clients", did Chandris play safe? "I knew what the parameters were," she says, "and that I couldn't get works that were disturbing. Anything by Francis Bacon would have been out. The artists I aimed for were at the cutting edge. People like Lichtenstein are put in as reference points."

It remains to be seen whether her captive audience will bother to look, or will simply treat the collection as expensive wallpaper while they enjoy the headier pleasures of the Caribbean. *Galaxy's* 1997 cruising route.



White Terrier by Jeff Koons, one of the *Galaxy's* 450 works of art

CONCERTS: Works by modern composers showcase a constellation of sparkling young talent

MUSICIANS should always strive to serve the composers they perform, and those featured in the second pair of concerts in this year's extraordinary *Park Lane Group* Young Artists series certainly did. But here the music served them well, too, in showing off some serious talent.

The early evening recital at the Purcell Room showcased the pianist Roderick Chadwick, whose musicianship was best revealed in Messia



POP

After her annus mirabilis, what next for the veteran folk heroine, Norma Waterson?



RISING STAR

Fame on a shoestring: Molly Gaisford has turned producer to launch her acting career

THE TIMES ARTS



TOMORROW

How does Barbra Streisand rate in *The Mirror Has Two Faces*? Read Geoff Brown's review of new films



TOMORROW

... and Charles Mackerras's fine new Beethoven interpretation is among the classical CDs reviewed

Different class, as Jarvis would put it

Bigger than Oasis? Well not quite, but it is a tempting line for any publicist. Last autumn Norma Waterson famously saw off not only the Gallagher brothers but also the Manic Street Preachers and Black Grape when she was voted runner-up for the Mercury Music Prize. Only *Different Class*, by Jarvis Cocker's Pulp, prevented her carrying off the top prize and the most unlikely victory since Aesop's tortoise taught the hare a lesson never to be forgotten. But a few months after all the fuss, her five minutes of pop fame have not so much changed her life as left her mildly bemused. "I read the newspapers and have to remind myself that this is me they are talking about," she says.

Some things have changed: without the Mercury it is doubtful that she would this Sunday be selling out one of London's biggest rock venues, the Shepherd's Bush Empire. And, she says, "people do come up to me in the street and say: 'Aren't you that lady who won that prize?'" She loved the experience, but after 30 years as the doyenne of traditional English folk singing it would take more than a convivial evening with Liam and the lads to launch her on a new career as the latest Britpop sensation. "The food was good, I enjoyed the champagne and I thought the music was great, especially Pulp. But it hasn't changed what I do."

The popular papers, of course, revelled in the bizarre spectacle of a Yorkshire grandmother competing against Pulp and Oasis for pop's biggest prize. Much was made of her 57 years and, if the Spice Girls ever decide to recruit a sixth member, Waterson is unlikely to be on the shortlist. But she has a pleasing and expressive face and it seemed that picture editors deliberately sought the most unflattering photographs, so that her alleged lack of glamour became part of the story. "That didn't hurt at all," says a woman who is content if people find beauty in her voice. If anything

Only Pulp finished ahead of the legendary folk singer Norma Waterson in last year's Mercury stakes. Nigel Williamson reports

she has played up to the granny image: the album that won her the nomination started receiving rave reviews she told her record company that the music press was "only being nice because I'm a little old lady".

Strangely, the album — which David Sinclair also nominated one of his three favourites of 1996 in *The Times* — was her first solo recording in a career which began in the pubs and folk clubs of Hull in the late 1950s. She herself is not quite sure why the solo album was so long in coming. "I suppose no one asked me before," she says. "All my life I've sung unaccompanied traditional music, but I've always sung with my family and that always seemed enough. It was an indulgence to go to Hollywood and record new songs with other musicians. I loved doing it, but I thought it would fade out of sight. No one was more surprised than me at the way the album took off."

Traditional music has for long been a cottage industry for the extended Waterson family. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s she performed with her sister Lal, brother Mike and cousin John Harrison as the Watsons, four magnificent unaccompanied voices that produced some of the most influential folk albums ever recorded. Later they were augmented by Waterson's husband, the guitarist Martin Carthy.

Most recently she and Carthy have been working and recording with their daughter Eliza, an exuberant fiddler and one of the brightest young hopes on the

English folk scene. It is this family unit which will perform in London this weekend. The new album, due in the spring, sees a return to traditional material. It is also a collaborative effort and features no fewer than seven members of the family in different guises. Now, of course, the record company wants another solo album, which Waterson will start recording in the autumn. Will it be traditional or contemporary songs? "All sorts. The world is my oyster now," she says. "How about Norma Waterson sings George Formby?"

Punk should have happened in the folk clubs

Her voice is so honest, so full of conviction, you feel that she could probably sing the telephone directory, let alone *When I'm Cleaning Windows*, and still move people. Carthy has said that his wife is shy, even timid, but once she opens her mouth and begins to sing she knows no fear. "Singing feels very sexual to me," she says. "Sometimes it feels like I'm flying, almost as if the voice is not a part of me at all."

That Britain's finest traditional singer had to record an album of contemporary songs before the pop world took any notice is perhaps not surprising. Not only was the choice of material a departure, but her rich, earthy voice had never before been recorded against an amplified backing. But she says she approached songs by the likes of Billy Bragg, Elvis Costello and even the Grateful Dead in exactly the same way as traditional material. "You try and tell a story. They are just human songs about people's lives. I hope it doesn't sound

like a copy of some transatlantic thing. It is meant to sound very English."

This sense of her own roots lies at the heart of Waterson's music. "There is not enough emphasis on the English tradition," she says. "Over the centuries the Church and the State have conspired to make the English embarrassed about their own folk culture. When we play English traditional music in America or Canada they think it is wonderful. Over here people behave as if English heritage consists of nothing more than Buckingham Palace and the Changing of the Guard."

Despite her reputation as a great traditionalist, Waterson is critical of the folk world for failing to embrace new — and often brash — young ideas. This makes it no surprise that she felt so at home with the Britpop pack at the Mercury awards. "When punk came about it should have happened in the folk clubs," she says. "But the punks weren't allowed in and that is why folk music stagnated."

But she refuses to be pessimistic. "The fact that traditional music is still performed at all is a miracle in the age of television," she says. "The old songs are as relevant as ever. They are about love, death, incest, murder, unhappiness — the basic things that keep the world going round."

And what next? "We've been doing this for 30 years, and we'll just keep on doing it. Getting on planes, getting in cars, going to the next gig until the voice gives out." She was off the morning after we met for an eight-day tour of Japan. "We grumble sometimes but we are incredibly lucky. If I wasn't here right now I'd probably be doing the ironing."

Norma Waterson, Martin Carthy and Eliza Carthy play at the Shepherd's Bush Empire, London on Sunday. Norma Waterson's solo album is released by Hannibal Records



For decades Norma Waterson sang pure folk with her family. Now the pop charts know her as well

JAZZ IN LONDON: A spirited saxophonist, and a gifted gospel singer

Rhythms to chase away the flu blues

WHEN the January wind blows through the streets and winter ailments mount up, an undiluted dose of Houston Person's tenor saxophone goes a long way toward lifting the spirits. Listeners who, like me, felt distinctly below par at the beginning of this performance could not have failed to be cheered by his unpretentious grins 'n' gravy recipe.

Players of his pedigree, schooled in the no-nonsense ethos of rhythm and blues and that durable hybrid known as soul-jazz, are too often treated with a measure of condescen-

sion. His undemonstrative manner should not be mistaken for that of a lightweight.

A reliable partner for the singer Etta Jones on one album after another, he has also turned up in the unlikely company of pianist Ran Blake — one of Gunther Schuller's colleagues at the New England Conservatory — exploring stark, gospel-flavoured duets on the disc *Suffield Gothic*.

His set at the Jazz Café

Houston Person
Jazz Café

up-tempo blues or the familiar melody of *My Funny Valentine*. Person always impressed with the economy and precision of his soloing. Even when he occasionally gave the impression that he was dropping down a gear or two (a reasonable enough ploy in a musician in his sixties) he was always guaranteed to seize our attention with a crisply execut-

ed glissando or a brusque R&B riff.

Of the musicians in his highly efficient quartet, it was drummer Winston Clifford who made the deepest impression, combining precise time-keeping with an exuberant flurry of cross-beats. Whenever Person cooked a greasy slow blues, honked out a quotation from *Watermelon Man* or took a detour into a Latin ballad such as *Meditation*, Clifford was always there, hectoring and cajoling.

CLIVE DAVIS

Right in your faith

Ruth Naomi Floyd
606 Club, Chelsea

AS MIGHT be imagined from the title of her debut recording, *Songs for Desolate Times*, the American gospel singer Ruth Naomi Floyd is a woman with a mission. Seeing contemporary society as plagued by hopelessness and despair, she writes and performs songs whose lyrics either quote Christian scripture directly or roughly paraphrase it. Unusually, however, instead of operating in the musical arena generally associated with gospel singers such as Mahalia Jackson, Floyd is an out-and-out jazz singer.

What does come across immediately from Floyd, all specific messages aside, is an overwhelming desire to communicate. Her first song, *Or Truth?*, inspired by a James Baldwin novel, boasted the somewhat forbidding opening lines: "Judgment without any quality of the real falls short of the absolute, falls short of the truth." Floyd's great strength, though, lies in her ability to inject swing and

passion into the most stubbornly unpromising lyrics and so, driven by her rhythm section — drummer Web Thomas and bassist Jeremy Brown — and pleasingly embellished by the agile alto of Bobby Zankel and Steve Hamilton's sizzling piano, the song became a fastish bustle that easily accommodated the customary round of jazz solos.

More overtly scripture-based lyrics, in

the songs *Seek and Ye Shall Find*, *Reap What You Sow* and *The Last Shall Be First*, received equally jazzy treatment, but it was Duke Ellington's *Come Sunday* that brought out all the strength and subtle beauty in Floyd's voice. The slow, yearning melody highlighted not only her technical gifts — superb dynamic control and flexibility, faultless diction — but also her most important onstage asset: an unmistakable emotional integrity that conveys her music's power even to the most recalcitrant non-believer.

To the large numbers of sceptics in each camp — many of her religious acquaintances are reportedly as hostile to jazz and its perceived decadence as jazz fans are suspicious of organised religion — Floyd says: "Jesus didn't stand up in synagogues. He was right there in the streets, meeting people where they were."

CHRIS PARKER

GREAT BRITISH HOPES

Rising stars in the arts firmament
MOLLY GAISFORD

Age: 23.

Profession: Actress and producer.

Enterprise culture: Dis-mayed at failing to be signed up by London agents in the "cattle market" of their final weeks as drama students last May, Gaisford and fellow LAMDA graduate Justin Trefgarne established their own company, Odyssey Productions.

Debut production: *Blood and Ice*. Liz Lochhead's Eighties play about the writing of *Frankenstein*, began a four-week run at the New End Theatre, Hampstead,

last night, with Gaisford and Trefgarne as Mary and Percy Shelley. "The New End is an appropriate setting for the *Frankenstein* story because in the 19th century it was a mortuary. Keats watched post-mortems there."

Famous patron: John Link, the LAMDA tutor who is directing *Blood and Ice*, told the pair they should try to recruit a well-known name to their cause. "I really admire Dame Judi Dench and so we wrote to her. She sent back a letter saying she was impressed by our enthusiasm and would give us her full



support. Having her as patron gave us an edge in getting off the ground."

Shoestring budget: "Every-one involved in *Blood and Ice* is working for nothing — though we are paying for the stage manager's Travel-card." Even with financial

help from several LAMDA council members and the Keats-Shelley Memorial Association, they will still have to fill about 40 of the New End's 77 seats every night to cover costs.

Long-term goal? "The initial idea was just to stage one play and get agents to see us and pick us up. But now we want *Odyssey* to give actors a chance to work as soon as they leave drama school, and stage work by unknown writers. We want it to be a hotbed for new talent."

Self-assessment: "I'm not the world's greatest organiser and wouldn't want to give up acting to become a full-time producer. I love trying to be funny but I'm probably more convincing in straight roles."

DANIEL ROSENTHAL

AN EXCLUSIVE READER OFFER THE TIMES

ENJOY A FREE DAY AT A HEALTH CLUB

To coincide with the launch of our Discovery Diet Guide, *The Times* has teamed up with LivingWell and other leading health clubs to offer you up to six free visits to any of the participating clubs, a list of which will be printed on Saturday.

The offer allows you to use the same facilities at the health clubs as those enjoyed by full members. Simply present the voucher below when you go for your pre-booked visit.

Readers who take up this offer will be entered into a prize draw with a chance to win an annual health club membership to your chosen club. There are memberships worth £40,000 to be won.



THE TIMES PRESENTS A VOUCHER FOR A FREE VISIT TO A HEALTH CLUB

This voucher entitles the bearer to a free day's membership at one of the health clubs listed in *The Times* on January 6 and 11, 1997. This voucher also acts as a prize draw entry coupon for the chance to win a free membership for a year to the winner's chosen health club. There are annual memberships worth a total of £40,000 to be won. The offer is valid until Friday February 28, 1997. This date is also the closing date for entry to the prize draw.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS 1. The offer is subject to availability. 2. Readers must book their visits in advance by telephone and state that they are using *The Times* offer. 3. This voucher must be presented when you turn up on the day. 4. The offer cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. 5. There will be additional charges for therapies. Please check what is included in the offer at the time of booking.

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If you would prefer not to receive information and offers from organisations carefully selected by *The Times* please tick ☐

TERMS AND CONDITIONS 1. The offer is valid until February 28, 1997. 2. Your free visit must be booked in advance by telephone quoting *The Times* offer. 3. The printed voucher must be presented to the club when you make your visit. 4. Each voucher is valid for one free visit. 5. A maximum of six free visits are allowed per reader. 6. No photocopies will be accepted. 7. The offer is subject to availability. 8. The offer cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. 9. There may be additional charges for beauty treatments. 10. It is advisable to confirm what facilities are included in the offer at the time of booking.

CHANGING TIMES

Related civil and criminal actions

Regina v Loominster Magistrates Court and Another, Ex parte Aston Manor Brewery Co

Before Lord Justice McCowan and Mr Justice Collins
[Judgment December 19]

When a party was the defendant in related civil and criminal proceedings, it was an abuse of process for those criminal proceedings to continue if the civil proceedings were in effect a prosecution of the criminal proceedings, putting the prosecution in a position where they were unable to exercise independently their duty as prosecutors.

The Queen's Bench Divisional Court so held in a reserved judgment when allowing an application for judicial review by Aston Manor Brewery Co of the refusal on November 1, 1995, by Loominster Magistrates to stay proceedings concerning charges

brought under regulation 13(4) of the Natural Mineral Waters Regulations (SI 1985 No 7) and section 15(1)(b) of the Food Safety Act 1990 brought by Hereford and Worcester County Council, on the ground of abuse of process.

The applicant was a company selling bottled spring water which became subject to civil proceedings brought by another company, who alleged that the applicant represented its water to be connected to water sold by the plaintiff. Later, related criminal proceedings were brought by the council on the plaintiff's complaint.

Counsel instructed by the council to prosecute, was already representing the plaintiff in the civil proceedings, and in that capacity had possession of documents which were also relevant to the criminal proceedings. When the criminal matter came to trial, prosecuting counsel would not

allow the applicant to see these documents on the ground that they were covered by the plaintiff's privilege.

Having heard argument on those issues, the justices adjourned the case sine die, and refused to hear applications from the applicant for disclosure of the documents and for proceedings to be stayed on the ground of abuse of process.

Mr Ian Croxford, QC and Mr Thomas Lowe for the applicants; Mr Timothy Straker, QC and Mr Peter Miller for the council; the justices did not appear and were not represented.

LORD JUSTICE MCCOWAN said that neither prosecuting counsel nor the council had acted improperly, because both had obtained the permission to use the plaintiff's documents through its solicitors, before counsel was instructed.

Whether they had acted wisely was another matter, however.

It should have been appreciated that there would be a conflict of interest if counsel was put in a position where he had a duty as a prosecutor to disclose to the applicant material which the plaintiff would prefer he did not disclose.

When that risk materialised, the plaintiff was in effective control of the question of disclosure and the council were unable to exercise independently their duty as prosecutors.

The integrity of the proceedings had been compromised by that and it was no longer possible for the applicant to have a fair trial. The application would be allowed and proceedings permanently stayed.

Mr Justice Collins agreed. Solicitors: Dibb Lupton & Broomfield, Birmingham; Mr R. A. Yates, Worcester.

Rights of custody under Convention

In re S (a Minor) (Abduction: European Convention)

Before Lord Justice Butler-Sloss, Lord Justice Evans and Sir Iain Gledhill
[Judgment December 18]

"Rights of custody" for the purpose of the European Convention on the Protection of Children and Enforcement of Decisions Concerning Custody of Children 1980 (Cmd 828), so that a parent who had an interim care and control order made in his favour had an order for custody within the scope of both Conventions.

The Court of Appeal so held in allowing an appeal by a father against a decision of Mr M. Swift, QC, sitting as a deputy High Court judge, that neither Convention applied to the case of the appellant's son who had been removed from the jurisdiction.

The court declared that the child had been wrongfully retained out of the jurisdiction by his grandmother and aunt contrary to article 3 of the Hague Convention and had been unlawfully removed from the jurisdiction contrary to article 12 of the European Convention.

Miss Judith Parker, QC and Miss Maureen Mulvey for the father; Miss Patricia Scotland, QC and Lord Phillips for the grandmother and aunt.

LORD JUSTICE BUTLER-SLOSS said that the order for interim care and control gave the father rights of custody, albeit that they were on an interim basis and

he shared them with the High Court. He had the right to take the child anywhere within England and Wales and to prevent any other person from removing the child from him without an order of the court.

The child was habitually resident in England at the time of his removal to Ireland and remained so thereafter. The father obtained rights of custody and on being served with the order requiring the return of the child to England the retention by the aunt was wrongful within the meaning of article 3 of the Hague Convention.

There were few decisions in English law on the interpretation of the European Convention. The removal of a child across international frontiers by a person without a legal right to care for him appeared to be unique in the English courts applying the international Conventions.

Looking at the travaux préparatoires of each Convention but particularly the report on the European Convention it was clear that the situation created by the present facts had not been contemplated by the authors.

It had been argued that a person who had been granted care and control under a wardship order did not come within article 1 of the European Convention but the inclusion of wardship in paragraph 2 of Schedule 3 to the Child Abduction and Custody Act 1985, by which a custody order was defined for the purposes of section 27, and which applied to both Conventions, was the answer to that argument.

Solicitors: Fletcher Dervish & Co; Reynolds Porter Chamberlain.

Caution urged in testing committal case

Neill v Director of Public Prosecutions

Before Lord Justice McCowan and Mr Justice Collins
[Judgment December 2]

A solicitor was entitled to request an old style committal for the purpose of testing whether or not an essential witness would attend court, but caution should be exercised in such cases, and action taken only on the clearest written instructions from the client.

The Queen's Bench Divisional Court so held when allowing an appeal by way of case stated by Mr Simon Neill, against the decision of Oxford Justices on January 19, 1996 to make a wasted costs order of £142 against him.

Mr Neill, a solicitor whose client was charged with indecent assault, on instructions had requested the justices to hold an old style committal to anticipate that the complainant would not turn up at court. When she did appear with the intention of giving evidence, Mr Neill agreed that a paper committal would be satisfactory and she need not give oral evidence. The justices made a wasted costs order against Mr Neill finding that he had acted unreasonably.

Mr David Taylor for the appellant; Mr Rhodri Price Lewis for respondent.

LORD JUSTICE MCCOWAN said that the appellant learned from his client that the complainant, who was known to him, might not pursue her complaint. Without the complainant's evidence there was no case at all and the appellant decided to have an old style committal, under section 6(1) of the Magistrates Courts Act 1980, to see

if the complainant gave evidence. It had been said that the appellant should have contacted the prosecutor to investigate the truth of the matter.

His Lordship said that it should not be forgotten that the appellant was doing this to do his best for his client, and the appellant might reasonably be concerned that if the police were warned they might contact the complainant to "firm up" her evidence.

Mr Price Lewis relied on *R v Epping and Harlow Justices, Ex parte Massaro* (1973) QB 433. In that case Lord Widgery, Lord Chief Justice, had said that the function of committal proceedings was as a safeguard to ensure that no one stood trial unless a prima facie case had been made out. Massaro did not assist in that case there was evidence other than that of the complainant.

It seemed that the justices did not appreciate that the appellant was seeking a situation where there was no prima facie case against his client. In *Ridehalgh v Horsefield* (1994) Ch 205 the acid test for making a wasted costs order was stated to be whether the conduct in question admitted of a reasonable explanation. Although others might have taken a different course, the appellant's conduct was reasonable.

His Lordship added that in such circumstances solicitors should be very cautious and only act upon the clearest instructions in writing.

The appeal would be allowed and the wasted costs order quashed.

Mr Justice Collins agreed.

Solicitors: Arnold & Fox, Cowley; Crown Prosecution Service, Abingdon.

Integrity of BBC an issue for decision

Barker v Statesman and Nation Publishing Co Ltd and Others

Before Lord Justice Nourse and Lord Justice Brooke
[Judgment December 5]

Although it was within the discretion of a trial judge to strike out an action for malicious falsehood without hearing any evidence from the plaintiff or his witnesses, it was a most unusual course to take, especially when the integrity of the British Broadcasting Corporation was an issue for decision.

The Court of Appeal so stated in a reserved judgment granting an application by the plaintiff, Mr

Phillip B. Barker, for leave to appeal against a decision by Mr Justice Allott on June 24, 1996, to strike out his action for damages for malicious falsehood against a number of defendants that included the BBC and Mr Duncan Campbell, an investigative journalist.

Mr Barker in person; Mr Desmond Browne, QC and Miss Adrienne Page for the BBC and Mr Campbell.

LORD JUSTICE BROOKE said that the case arose out of the plaintiff's brief connection in 1989 with Brownings Clinical Pathology Services Ltd, a company that had offered experimental treat-

ment to AIDS sufferers, and a BBC Watchdog programme that suggested unfair pecuniary advantage was being taken of, and false hopes offered to vulnerable patients.

The plaintiff, shown up in a bad light and believing the defendants were activated by malice, felt that he had not received justice because the judge took the wholly exceptional course of deciding the issue on the evidential material on which the programme was based without hearing the plaintiff or his many witnesses give evidence.

There was sufficient in the plaintiff's complaints to justify his being granted leave.

Although it was within the

discretion of the judge to make the order he did, if he considered it fair and safe to do so, it was a most unusual course and it did necessitate his relying heavily on the integrity of the BBC and Mr Campbell in relation to transcripts of taped conversations if he was to determine the issue without hearing any oral evidence from the people whose conversations were being asserted to be untrue.

The integrity of the BBC and Mr Campbell was at the heart of one of the issues the judge had to decide. Lord Justice Nourse agreed.

Solicitors: Ms Sarah Jones, Shepherd's Bush.

LORD JUSTICE PHILLIPS said that he was not persuaded that it would always be appropriate to order liability insurers to pay a plaintiff's costs where they had unsuccessfully defended a claim made against their insured if the result of such an order would be to render them liable beyond their contractual limit of cover.

The appropriate order might well turn on the facts.

South Alliance had funded the plaintiff's litigation under a commercial agreement but that was the only ground that could validly be advanced in support of the contention that they should be ordered to pay Young's costs. In particular, they had no interest in the result; did not initiate the litigation; exercised no control over its conduct; and could not be accused of "wanting and officious intermeddling" in the dispute.

The Court of Appeal so held when allowing an appeal by Aslam Heath, a former firm of

solicitors, against the decision of Judge Marr-Johnson sitting as a judge of the High Court on May 16, 1995 whereby he ordered under the inherent jurisdiction of the court that the appellants pay the costs of an application for a Mareva injunction including the costs of two hearings.

The appellants had been instructed by Mr Nelson to take all appropriate steps to protect his property. The appellant so acted entirely in innocence of the fact that Mr Nelson was, as it later transpired, an undisclosed bankrupt.

Mr Guy Mansfield, QC, for the

appellants; Mr Richard Evans for the third respondent.

LORD JUSTICE MCCOWAN said that a bankrupt was entitled to bring any action except one relating to his property. That meant that he had capacity and authority to retain solicitors.

A solicitor, as the appellant contended, who lent his name to the commencement of proceedings thereby said that he had a client, that the client bore the name of the party to the proceedings and that that client had authorised the proceedings.

He did not represent that the client had a good cause of action.

In commencing the proceedings, therefore, the appellant had had authority to do so and warranted no more than that.

Accordingly any discretion exercised by the judge should have been exercised in favour of the appellants.

Solicitors: Barlow Lyde & Gilbert; H. Omar & Co, Battersea.

Substituting verdict

Regina v Peterson

The discretionary power of the Court of Appeal conferred by section 3 of the Criminal Appeal Act 1968, under which it "may, instead of allowing or dismissing [an] appeal, substitute for the verdict found by the jury a verdict of guilty of another offence", should be exercised in the light of what would be just in all the circumstances of the procedural and evidential history of the case.

The Court of Appeal, Criminal Division (Lord Justice Potter, Mr Justice Owen and Judge Martin Tucker, QC) so stated on December 6 when granting Andrew Duncan Peterson leave to appeal and substituting for his conviction on March 31, 1995 at Swansea Crown Court Judge H. V. Williams, QC and a jury of obtaining property by deception, a verdict of guilty of procuring the execution of

a valuable security by deception. The prison sentence of nine months, suspended for one year, was left unaltered.

LORD JUSTICE POTTER said that the trial was one of a number concerning building society mortgage fraud, following *R v Gready* (The Times July 11, 1996; [1996] 3 WLR 255) and *R v Graham* (The Times October 28, 1996) the original conviction had to be quashed and the prosecution asked for a verdict of guilty of the other offence to be substituted.

It was submitted that because of the grave effect upon the appellant's career, as an act of mitigation or mercy no other verdict should be substituted. Their Lordships could not accede to that. The apparently unlimited discretion of the court was constrained upon the procedural and evidential history of the case.

Insurer's entitlement

Murphy and Another v Young & Co's Brewery plc and Another

A legal expense insurer was permitted to cap its liability and once the cover had been exhausted it was not always reasonable or just to order the insurer to pay the costs of the adverse successful party regardless of the contractual limit of liability.

The Court of Appeal (Lord Justice Butler-Sloss, Lord Justice Phillips and Sir John Balcombe) so held on November 20 in dismissing an appeal by Young & Co's Brewery plc, the successful defendants to an action, against a decision of Mr Griffiths-Williams, QC, sitting as a deputy High Court judge, rejecting their application for costs against South Alliance and London Insurance plc, which had provided legal expenses insurance to the plaintiffs.

LORD JUSTICE PHILLIPS said that he was not persuaded that it would always be appropriate to order liability insurers to pay a plaintiff's costs where they had unsuccessfully defended a claim made against their insured if the result of such an order would be to render them liable beyond their contractual limit of cover.

The appropriate order might well turn on the facts.

South Alliance had funded the plaintiff's litigation under a commercial agreement but that was the only ground that could validly be advanced in support of the contention that they should be ordered to pay Young's costs. In particular, they had no interest in the result; did not initiate the litigation; exercised no control over its conduct; and could not be accused of "wanting and officious intermeddling" in the dispute.

Bankrupt entitled to instruct solicitor

Nelson v Nelson and Others

Before Lord Justice McCowan, Lord Justice Peter Gibson and Lord Justice Waller
[Judgment December 6]

A solicitor who unknowingly represented an undischarged bankrupt in commencing proceedings relating to his property had authority to do so, so long as the bankrupt had authority to retain him and accordingly the solicitor was not liable for costs thereby incurred.

The Court of Appeal so held when allowing an appeal by Aslam Heath, a former firm of

solicitors, against the decision of Judge Marr-Johnson sitting as a judge of the High Court on May 16, 1995 whereby he ordered under the inherent jurisdiction of the court that the appellants pay the costs of an application for a Mareva injunction including the costs of two hearings.

The appellants had been instructed by Mr Nelson to take all appropriate steps to protect his property. The appellant so acted entirely in innocence of the fact that Mr Nelson was, as it later transpired, an undisclosed bankrupt.

Mr Guy Mansfield, QC, for the

appellants; Mr Richard Evans for the third respondent.

LORD JUSTICE MCCOWAN said that a bankrupt was entitled to bring any action except one relating to his property. That meant that he had capacity and authority to retain solicitors.

A solicitor, as the appellant contended, who lent his name to the commencement of proceedings thereby said that he had a client, that the client bore the name of the party to the proceedings and that that client had authorised the proceedings.

He did not represent that the client had a good cause of action.

In commencing the proceedings, therefore, the appellant had had authority to do so and warranted no more than that.

Accordingly any discretion exercised by the judge should have been exercised in favour of the appellants.

Solicitors: Barlow Lyde & Gilbert; H. Omar & Co, Battersea.

Court of Appeal

Drugs confiscation orders

Regina v Clark (Paul John) Regina v Bentham (John Preston)

Before Lord Bingham of Cornhill, Lord Chief Justice, Mr Justice Sachs and Mr Justice Toulson
[Judgment December 5]

Guidance on confiscation orders was given by the Court of Appeal, Criminal Division, when refusing two renewed applications for leave to appeal against sentence and orders under the Drug Trafficking Offences Act 1986.

John Preston Bentham had enlisted Paul John Clark and a friend, Watkins, to assist in a conspiracy over a period of 10 months to produce amphetamine in the value of £35 million.

Both applicants had entered guilty pleas and following inquiries into the amount of their assets they were sentenced on July 19, 1995 Bentham was sentenced to 12 years imprisonment and Clark to seven.

Additionally, a confiscation order of £3,199,599 was made against Bentham and he was ordered to serve 10 years in default of payment. A confiscation order of £53,000 was made against Clark and he was ordered to serve two years in default.

Mr James Curtis, QC, for the Crown; Mr James Turner for Clark; Mr R. Alan Jones, QC, for Bentham.

THE LORD CHIEF JUSTICE said that there were difficulties in establishing whether any goods were the product of drug trafficking. Accordingly the Act contained an unusual statutory presumption [in section 2] on which the court could rely in arriving at a decision. That prior assumption could be rebutted by a defendant.

The effect and meaning of the Act as summarised by Lord Lane, Lord Chief Justice, in *R v Dickens* (1990) 2 QB 102 was accepted by all as correct.

The first question the court had to ask was: whether the defendant appeared to be sentenced for a drug trafficking offence (section 1). The second was whether the defendant had benefited from drug trafficking (section 12).

That had to be considered in the light of sections 1(1) and 2(1). In answering that, the court was not bound to make the statutory assumptions in section 2(3).

The circumstances in which a court might exercise its discretion had been addressed by Lord Justice Simon in *R v Redburn* (1992) 1 WLR 1852. His Lordship said that the criticism of that view in *R v Rose* (1993) 1 WLR 834 appeared to be based on a misunderstanding of what Lord Justice Simon had said.

Having considered the words of Lord Justice Allott in *R v Khan* (unreported, CA, February 26,

1996) his Lordship stated that whether or not the defendant could exercise its discretion when it was reasonable to do so.

If the court made the statutory assumptions in section 2(3)(a) and (b) the next stage involved two questions:

First, did the property appear to have been held by the defendant since conviction or since the beginning of the six-year period for the making of the statutory assumptions?

Second, had any expenditure since the beginning of the six-year period been met out of payments made by the defendant?

The court could make use of prima facie evidence in answering those two questions. The next stage, if the court made the statutory assumptions, was to ask whether any payment made by the defendant was a reward from drug trafficking.

Whether the court applied the presumption or relied on evidence or both, where the defendant had benefited from drug trafficking the next question would be what the value of the drug trafficking was: sections 2(3)(a) and 2(3).

Once it was clear what amount was to be recovered under section 14, 4 and 5, the court was obliged to make an order in that amount under section 15(4).

It was open to the defendant to rebut the presumption if the realisable property was inadequate for the amount to be recovered under section 4(1).

In the present case, his Lordship said that it was clear beyond argument that the trial judge had made the proper assumptions. The applicants had failed to show that they had any significant source of income other than from drug trafficking. It was therefore entirely appropriate for the judge to make the orders he had made.

Both applicants had appealed against the length of the terms of imprisonment imposed in default of payment. His Lordship referred to *R v Scrymgeour* (1994) 15 Cr App R (S) 521. The question a judge had to ask was what period, not exceeding the statutory maximum, was necessary in order to show that the defendant was paying the amount ordered.

The court would take into account the fact that the larger the sum of money involved the greater the incentive to the defendant to opt for a prison sentence to avoid payment. Where there was a lack of assets the court could vary the order. Here, there was no basis for holding that the terms imposed were longer than was necessary.

Solicitors: Crown Prosecution Service, Headquarters; Berry & Berry, Tunbridge.

Underwriters cannot avoid liability

Layher Ltd v Lowe and Others

Before Lord Justice Nourse, Lord Justice Saville and Lord Justice Brooke
[Judgment December 17]

Underwriters relying on the standard terms of their claims procedure could not repudiate liability for indemnifying the insured for costs incurred in defending itself in litigation arising out of an accident during repair work carried out to Uppark House.

The requirement that the insured give immediate notice of any occurrence likely to give rise to a claim did not arise, there being no more than a possibility in the immediate aftermath of the accident that a claim would be made against the insured.

The Court of Appeal so held dismissing an appeal by Mr David Lowe, representing himself and the other underwriters of Lloyd's syndicate 657, from the judgment of Judge Thorpe, QC, sitting as a judge of the Queen's Bench Division on official referees' business,

on May 5, 1995, upholding the claim of the plaintiff, Layher Ltd, that it was entitled under its policy to be indemnified for the costs of litigation it had incurred.

Mr Richard Mawrey, QC, for the underwriters; Mr John Blackburn, QC and Mr Andrew Goddard for the plaintiff.

LORD JUSTICE SAVILLE said that in 1989 a temporary roof was erected on scaffolding over Uppark House in Sussex, a National Trust property, in order to facilitate repairs to fire damage. In January 1990 a storm blew off that roof. Two workmen died and there was substantial damage.

Two years later, the National Trust had brought proceedings against the scaffolding contractors. The plaintiff had supplied competent contractors for the fitting of the roof and it was in due course joined as a party to the litigation. The proceedings were compromised after the trial had started but the plaintiff advanced a claim under its insurance for its costs which under the compromise

it bore itself. By condition 13 of the standard Lloyd's Commercial, Industrial and Contractors Combined Liability Insurance an assured "shall give immediate notice in writing with full particulars of a happening of any occurrence likely to give rise to a claim."

The underwriters had repudiated liability for the claim on the ground that the incident itself was an "occurrence likely to give rise to a claim" and the plaintiff had given no immediate notice of that occurrence so that there was no liability under the insurance.

The question was whether, looking at the matter objectively, assuming in favour of the underwriters that that was what one had to do, there was an occurrence likely to give rise to a claim under the certificate of insurance.

The occurrence on which the underwriters relied was the incident of January 1990. Since condition 13 required immediate notice to be given, it seemed to follow that the question had to be answered by reference to the state

of affairs as it existed immediately after the incident.

Mr Mawrey accepted, correctly, that "likely" meant at least a 50 per cent chance of a claim being made. What he was unable to do was to show that a claim was likely.

The plaintiff had not designed the scaffolding or the roof but had merely supplied components including securing wedges. Nothing suggested that the incident had resulted from any fault in what the plaintiff had supplied.

Accepting that in this litigious age it might be said, at the time in question, that a claim was possible by the National Trust or the contractors by way of seeking to pass on the claim made on them or indirectly on others. But the condition used the expression "likely" not "possible". It could not be said that the underwriters had brought themselves within the wording of condition 13.

LORD JUSTICE NOURSE and LORD JUSTICE BROOKE agreed.

Solicitors: Lloyd Cooper; Timmus Salner Decker.

Scots Law Report January 8 1997 Outer House

Rejection insufficient for counter-notice

Scottish Life Assurance Co Ltd v Agfa-Gevaert Ltd

Before Lord Penne
[Judgment November 29]

Where a rent-review clause in a lease provided for the landlords to serve notice of their proposed new rent, and bound the tenants to pay that rent unless within one month they served a counter-notice stating the figure they proposed instead, a counter-notice stating simply that the landlords' figure was rejected did not imply that the tenants were proposing a new rent should remain at its existing level and was therefore insufficient to prevent the landlords' figure from becoming the new rent.

Lord Penne, sitting in the Outer House of the Court of Session, so held, granting decree in favour of the Scottish Life Assurance Co Ltd, in an action brought by them against Agfa-Gevaert Ltd.

Mr Anne Smith, QC, for the pursuers; Mr James Drummond-Yeung, QC, for the defenders.

LORD PENNE said that the lease provided that upon service of notice of the new rent "The tenants shall be deemed to have accepted that yearly rent as the open market rent unless they shall within one month of the receipt of such notice serve a counter-notice stating the figure which they considered in the circumstances to be a fair and reasonable rent."

On November 8, 1995, the pursuers served on their tenants, the defenders, notice that they re-

quired the rent to be reviewed to the sum of £50,000. The defenders replied on November 10 acknowledging receipt of the notice and stated: "We reject your proposals to increase the rent and we have instructed our agent to act on our behalf. You will be hearing from him." A month followed without further correspondence.

In his Lordship's opinion, it was an essential requirement of a valid counter-notice under the clause, that, expressly or by necessary implication from its terms, the document relied on expressed a figure which represented the tenants' view of the open-market rent of the premises.

Those were the plain terms of the clause and there was nothing in the rest of the lease which would contradict them. Precisely why the clause stipulated for a figure was not at all clear. The arbitration provisions did not restrict the arbitrator to a range of values determined by the notice and counter-notice.

Caution urged
in testing
committal case

The secretary now dictates

With higher qualifications and greater IT skills, there is a new pivot in the office, says Joan Llewellyn Owens

Recent downsizing of organisations, particularly in the financial sector, has led to a new perception of what the secretary's task should be.

Middle managers are being encouraged to type their own letters, manage their own diaries and send their own e-mails. They no longer have secretaries of their own, although top management usually retains a PA. Some firms, such as IBM, allow managers to dictate to a computer, by means of voice recognition.

This downsizing and the fact that the 'technical' handling skills of secretaries today have outstripped those of the people they work for, have led to a new pivotal role for secretaries as co-ordinators, communicators and organisers (CCOs).

"Secretaries are responsible for marrying up all the work that has to be done and distributing it to managers, who may be either hot-desking or in other locations."

Secretaries may work for as many as 80 people, as in her department at the London International Financial Futures and Options Exchange, says Mary Lou Carrington, Director of Business Development at Life, Susan Vinnicombe, Dean of Management and Administrative Faculty at Cranfield School of Management, spoke of secretaries as liaising between marketing, sales, PR and personnel. In some cases they were replacing middle managers.

Birmingham Tec reports that secretaries will increasingly centre around gatekeeping workloads for managers, providing support for other team members, independent work managing specific projects and using and managing more advanced IT applications.

There are new positions, too, for network managers to integrate all the technology. At the Coolfin Partnership, an Irish-based IT consultancy, one person combines the roles of network supervisor, secretary to the partners and training manager.

Former secretaries, given training, run business centres providing worldwide technology platforms for customers of Regus. Digital's 'touchdown' centres for staff are also managed by ex-secretaries.

The secretary almost always used to be in a subservient role, with little opportunity for advancement. The suggestion was made at the forum that if secretaries were given a different title, such as CCO, executive assistant, office manager, administrator, it would be easier to gain a proper career structure, with the opportunity to move into management, if wished.

In Birmingham, because of the increasing professional nature of secretarial work, more



and more employers are seeking graduate secretaries, says David Greer, information services manager of the Birmingham Tec: "If you don't provide a structure that allows these people to move up in the company, you will end up with dissatisfied people at the secretarial level, overqualified for the jobs they are doing."

Some organisations are ready to do just this. Andersen Consulting, Coopers & Lybrand and 3M are among those looking into the secretary's role and considering renaming them. At Coopers & Lybrand they train their secretaries not only in the latest

software, but in interpersonal and communication skills, project management and business awareness.

"Our secretaries," says training manager Rita Moss, "have always had an opportunity to go into management."

The Birmingham Tec has investigated the changes and issues for clerical and secretarial staff in the area, and asks — but does not answer — the question: "Will people be unable to finance themselves through a degree equivalent course because excluded from becoming secretaries?"

quoted one senior manager as saying: "What we've lost most is personal networks."

Though most secretaries welcome increased responsibilities, some grumble. During one workshop, Coopers & Lybrand's Rita Moss said their secretaries thought the managers were doing the interesting jobs and leaving the boring work to them. At 3M the telephone was said to be the secretary's bugbear. Secretaries who wanted to take on project work were interrupted by having to answer managers' telephones when they were out.

It would seem that secretaries sometimes need to be more assertive. "Do the women here feel they must defer to the chaps because they are men?" asked Mary Baker, chairman of Tourism for All and formerly president of Women in Management. She had just pointed out that most of the working party presentations at the forum had been made

by men, despite the fact that only 20-25 per cent of those present were male.

We have moved away from the macho hierarchical pyramid," she added. "We are working in teams and devolving responsibility. Women have a management style which is co-operative and consultative and flexible. Women are sensitive to what people are looking for. Technology is a great communicating tool wholly in line with women's natural skills, yet only one in five women is going into computing courses in higher education."

The need for each secretary to think of herself as Me pic and take responsibility for increasing her own efficiency and knowledge was constantly explained during the forum. Job security, said managers, depended on keeping her skills constantly updated.

FOUR STEPS TO WIDER HORIZONS

FOUR pilot courses by the Industrial Society, to help secretaries to widen their skills and contribution, are planned for January. Sally Wainwright writes. Each lasts two days. Today and tomorrow feature Business Writing Skills, which includes writing grammatically and composing letters, reports and minutes. Project Management, on the 23rd and 24th, will show the techniques needed to move from a support to an active role. It is followed by Interpersonal Skills — negotiating, persuading, influencing — on the 28th and 29th. Finally, Professional Skills, such as communications and understanding the role and responsibilities, is on the 30th and 31st. All are in London, but will probably develop nationwide. Tel: 0171-262 2401.

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Message Centre Assistants

£16,000 - £18,000 package

This is a key role where you will be representing the Firm by creating an excellent first impression to our clients. Excellent courteous telephone manner, sound judgement, and confidence with IT and telephones are essential qualities.

For an application form (to be returned to us by Friday, 17 January 1997) please ring 0171 304 1046 and state which role most interests you.

Hays Banking Personnel

SECRETARIAL DIVISION

ADMINISTRATOR/SECRETARY

£17-£18,000 + Benefits

Excellent opportunity for an Administrative Secretary to support a small team within the investment area of major UK bank. You will be responsible for organising, preparing, presenting, reports and ensure accurate handling of the team's managing departmental budget and providing secretarial support to the Unit Head. Excellent systems knowledge (Word, Excel and PowerPoint) and organisational skills and good sense of humour for this lively team are required.

0171 256 5798

TRADING FLOOR

£19,000 + paid off + Benefits

Working for this major international bank is great fun, financially rewarding and an exciting challenge. The role involves providing client administration, secretarial support and telephone facilities for the traders. If you are outgoing, hardworking, have experience within the finance industry in a similar fast paced environment and secretarial skills, typing 50 wpm, Word, Excel and PowerPoint. Call now for an immediate interview!

0171 256 5798

POWERPOINT SECRETARY - CORPORATE FINANCE

£18.00 P/hr

A large US bank needs your help! If you have professional skills in Powerpoint and Word for Windows then we would love to hear from you. Working within a very friendly and lively environment for 3 managers in the International Finance division, the role will be heavily orientated towards producing client presentations as well as providing general secretarial support. This position is 3-4 months long and benefits include subsidised lunches and pleasant office environment. A typing speed of 55wpm essential with a professional telephone manner is essential.

Call 0171 638 7083

ADMINISTRATOR/SECRETARY

£9-£9.50 P/hr

Are you an extremely motivated and organised individual just looking for the right position? This busy Tax Department requires 'on the spot' administrative/secretarial support to the 4 managers who work in this department. You will also be using your secretarial skills - Word, Excel and PowerPoint and typing of 45wpm - to fulfil the demanding role. If you are the right person there is also the opportunity of advancement into some exciting work. Call us now.

Call 0171 638 7083

41/42 London Wall, London EC2M 5TB.
Tel: 0171 638 7003. Fax: 0171 628 5057

senior Secretary to md and board of directors

London W1

£competitive + benefits

Country Casuals are renowned for beautiful clothes made from the finest materials. We now have the opportunity for an outgoing professional to join us at our busy Head Office.

In this varied role you will assist the MD and all our Directors by providing secretarial support. It will also be your responsibility to manage a junior secretary and several office functions including: company events, insurance, travel, car fleet, office maintenance, reception and customer service.

You must have accurate secretarial skills (Word, Excel and PowerPoint) together with several years similar management experience within a multiple retail environment. Confident liaising with people at all levels, you should be a hardworking and tenacious team player.

We offer a competitive salary, pension scheme, generous clothing allowance and excellent staff discount.

Please telephone for an application form on 0171-287 5181 or send your CV to Vicki Douglas, Country Casuals, 1/5 Poland Street, London W1V 4NB. Closing date for applications 20th January 1997.

COUNTRY CASUALS

START YOUR MANAGEMENT CAREER AT THE TOP

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT TEAM LEADER

c.£18k-plus benefits **Solihull**

Bass Brewers is the UK's pre-eminent brewer. If you're keen to prove yourself in a junior management role, there's no better place to start.

Based in the Sales/Customer Service department, you'll manage a team of administrative and secretarial staff, setting high standards of service in everything from customer liaison to typing. We're looking for someone with drive, initiative and commitment - someone who's determined to get it right first time every time.

You may already be working in a similar role or you may be a talented secretary, keen to make more of your flair for managing and organising people. You'll also need the maturity to make sure the team works well together. A confident and assertive communicator, educated to at least GCSE/'O' level standard, you have good secretarial skills, including Word for Windows and broad general office experience.

To apply, please send your full CV to **Personnel Designer Recruitment Ltd**, 38-41 Sisson Street, Burton-on-Trent DE11 1AX.

Bass Brewers are committed to equal opportunities.

Management Opportunity

Expanding West End Secretarial business requires a Recruitment Manager to take full responsibility to drive through changes and help plan for exciting growth. Previous recruitment experience is essential together with energy, commitment and excellent management skills.

Please 'phone today on: **0171 667 0700** and speak to Jessica.

RECRUITMENT

SECRETARY

Working to the Director and General Manager providing advice to the government on behalf of audiovisual industry. Proven typing, Word 4 Windows, Excel Spreadsheet and Database skills and experience essential. Ability to create own correspondence and organise small office necessary.

PART-TIME OFFICE JUNIOR

General office duties (typing, photocopying, faxing, mailing) 2.00 - 6pm Monday - Friday.

Call Anthea Hillman 0171 304 0040.

TOP PA/LEGAL SECRETARY

£23,000 PLUS BENEFITS

We are a niche law practice in media and intellectual property law with a high quality client base.

You are an experienced and capable legal secretary who can provide top quality secretarial and administrative support involving the quick and efficient production of accurate documentation and letters with clients. You will have a minimum of 50 wpm and be 100% accurate.

You will enjoy taking responsibility and using your initiative and will be happy to liaise with WordPerfect 6.1 and MS Word for Windows 3.1.

Please send a comprehensive curriculum vitae along with a covering letter stating your current salary to: **Michael Henry & Co, 37 Chancery Lane, London WC2A 1LP or fax to 0171 342 7996.**

NATIONAL ORGANISER

The Tory Reform Group, the leading moderate Tory pressure group, wishes to appoint a new National Organiser.

Outstanding administrative skills, including typing ability, required for this demanding full-time job in SW1.

Salary by negotiation.

Applications to: **The National Secretary, TRG, Abbey House, 4 Abbey Orchard Street, London SW1P 2JJ by 20 January 1997.**

DYNAMIC, PRO-ACTIVE PA/OFFICE MANAGER

Small W1 Chartered Secretaries. Excellent inter-personal skills and the ability to prioritise your work load as well as supporting two busy lawyers. Fast typing (70 wpm) and advanced PC skills (Windows 95/2.1 - Microsoft Office Pro and WPS.1) are a pre-requisite. Working in a professional environment, you need the ability to juggle multiple tasks and retain a good sense of humour. Similar secretaries with 5 years + experience and desire to become involved in the day to day management of a small office, should apply.

Salary £23,000

Please send your CV to **Personnel Editor, 22 Finsbury's Place, London W1V 1HN Fax: 0171 437 5978, immediately.**

SECRETARY/PA

We urgently seek to recruit a professional Secretary to organise our very Chief Executive. You must be well educated to at least 'O' level standard, have good organisational skills and be prepared to be totally involved.

It's a 50/50 secretary/administration role using Windows 95, knowledge of Excel and Access would be useful. Audio and fax work taking essential.

Please write with CV stating current salary to: **Lynette Greene**

SECRETARY

Required for busy West End non-smoking offices. Interesting varied work. Wordperfect for windows preferred. Please send CV to: **S. Rogoff, 12 Oyle Street, London W1P 7LG.**

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 8 1997

PRIVATE PA £30,000

Elizabeth H...

Recruitment

Up to £22,000 Personal Assistant

Tel: 0171 680 6806

La Crème de la Crème

Fax: 0171 782 7586

DRAKE INTERNATIONAL

Opportunities in the Art World £15,000
Two year contract to provide the international art world with a range of services. The successful candidate will be responsible for the day to day running of the company and will be based in London. The successful candidate will be responsible for the day to day running of the company and will be based in London. The successful candidate will be responsible for the day to day running of the company and will be based in London.

CALL AMANDA OR JACQUEL ON 0171 495 2927

Call Amanda or Jacquie on 0171 495 2927

PA/Secretary

Danco Asset Management Limited is looking for an enthusiastic and reliable PA/Secretary with a property background, to join Danco at their offices in Suffolk Street. You will report to a Director and Asset Manager with a variety of successful duties within the company as well as working as part of a team.

Flexible and mature in your approach to work, you must be punctual and well organized, with the confidence to deal with people at all levels. A smart appearance is also vital for this role. Non smoker preferable. Experience with Lotus Ami-pro and Lotus would be an advantage.

In return we offer a competitive salary, 20 days annual holiday and benefits. If you are committed to the highest standards in everything you do please contact me in writing enclosing a detailed CV to: Gail McGovern, Office Manager, Danco Asset Management Limited, 6 Suffolk Street, London SW1V 4BQ. Our closing date for the position is Wednesday 15 January 1997.

Strictly No Agencies

METAL TRADING COMPANY

TOP REWARDS FOR TRUE PROFESSIONAL
Assist busy Managing Director of leading international metal trading company based in superb offices in Mayfair. Dedicated, intelligent, self motivated and hard working, you should possess the highest work standards and the ability to handle pressure in your stride. 30 wpm typing and 100 wpm shorthand with legal, investment banking or commodity trading experience required. Please forward your CV with a hard written covering letter and details of your current remuneration to: The Managing Director MRG Ltd, 33 Old Bond Street, Mayfair London W1X 3AD

33 Old Bond Street, Mayfair London W1X 3AD

TAMARIS PLC

Is a rapidly expanding company specialising in healthcare. We now have a newly created position for a Senior Secretary/PA to work for our Chairman and Director of Operations at our Head Office in W2. If you have a minimum of 5 years experience (including Director level) with skills including Word for Windows and PowerPoint, are aged 28+ with a friendly personality and ability to work under pressure, please reply with your CV and a covering letter to: Tamaris plc, 12 Aldin St, London W2 2AS, by Friday 17 January 1997.

12 Aldin St, London W2 2AS, by Friday 17 January 1997

SECRETARY/PA

LCR Telecom requires an experienced secretary (20 years' exp) to provide full secretarial/PA support to the MD. This dynamic role will involve managing the MD's diary, correspondence and organising corporate functions. You must be a highly organised individual with excellent communication skills and a good sense of humour as a true knowledge of Microsoft Office is essential.

April 24th

Please apply in writing together with your CV: Victoria Ferguson, LCR Telecom, Kingsway House, 236 Kings Road, London SW10 0TE. Fax: 0171 374 3030

Victoria Ferguson, LCR Telecom, Kingsway House, 236 Kings Road, London SW10 0TE. Fax: 0171 374 3030

MANAGING CHANGE

Personal Assistant

Office Manager

Human Resources Contract

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career moves

PA/SEC MANAGING DIRECTOR'S BOOK PUBLISHING \$21,000

Top PA/Secretarial role in major Book Publishers for an organised senior PA who enjoys being in a pivotal role. Assisting two Managing Directors you will run diaries, arrange company trips to International Book Fairs, liaise with suppliers and generally hold the fort. It is essential that you have strong work exp (min 5 years at Director Level) preferably in a publishing/media environment. A-level culture education, min 90wpm S/H and a relaxed, yet professional approach.

Please call Jane Baily 0171 292 2902 (Direct line) or Tara Kelly 0171 292 2907

Southam House, 5-6 Argyll Street, London W1V 1AD. Tel: 0171 636 6411, Fax: 0171 434 0287

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Tel: 0171 680 6806
Language Opportunities

Multilingual Crème

Fax: 0171 782 7586
Language Opportunities

German Trading Floor

\$23,000 + + +
Busy marketing team based on trading floor of a highly successful Canadian investment house needs the organising skills of a bilingual secretary. Help arrange client seminars throughout Europe, coordinate lots of business travel, prepare presentations on Powerpoint & use your languages regularly. Fast typing & knowledge of MS Office essential. Great benefits include 25 days holiday, subsidised mortgage & gym membership. Please call Sabrina Stewart.

Bonne Année à PARIS

Blue-chip companies look great on your CV. We have a variety of international clients in central Paris who wish to recruit trained bilingual secretaries with around 1 year's work experience. Salaries range from £130-200 and big companies pay great benefits (eg private health insurance). If you speak and write good French and read ready to take off in the New Year... Please call Jennifer Ross.

German £19,000 + benefits

Leading City bank seeks fluent German-speaking secretary with banking experience to support a new German director and team. Working alongside 2 other secretaries your job will be busy and varied, requiring accuracy, 60 wpm typing & knowledge of Windows packages (Excel, Powerpoint). Benefits include mortgage subsidy, free lunch & paid overtime. Please call Sabrina Stewart.

Crone Corkill

Multilingual Recruitment

Euro London Appointments

41 South Molton Street
London W1Y 1HD

HOME COUNTIES
SENIOR PA - FLUENT GERMAN MIDDX c£22K
Proven Secretarial experience along with excellent presentation and communication skills are all essential to secure this challenging but rewarding position within a Financial Services company.

PA TO HR DIRECTOR - CONVERSATIONAL FRENCH BERKS c£16.5K
Polished Secretary required for busy Director of this large French Company. Good organisational, typing, admin, varied role.

TEAM SECRETARY - CONVERSATIONAL FRENCH BERKS c£14.5K
If you are a great team player and have an ability with powerpoint then this French Company needs you within this busy department. Excellent Secretarial skills are essential.

PA TO CHIEF EXECUTIVE - FLUENT TURKISH HERTS c£18K
Translation, research, organising will all play a large part in this rather special PA role. Secretarial skills are essential as is a keen interest to get truly involved in this huge international manufacturing company.

SENIOR PA - FLUENT FRENCH SURREY c£18K
Versatile Senior Secretary is urgently required by this French pharmaceutical company.

WEST END
BILINGUAL DUTCH SECRETARY W1 £21K
Ideally you will enjoy using your excellent WP skills to assist busy Dutch Lawyer. Fluency in English is a must. Legal experience not necessary.

GERMAN SPEAKING PA SECRETARY W1 £18K
Assist Managing Director with day to day running of the office. Excellent secretarial skills required. Rusty shorthand desirable but not essential.

BILINGUAL FRENCH PA SECRETARY W1 £23K
Assist chairman and Director. This will suit a good team player with excellent secretarial skills.

Tel: 0171 629 6269 Fax: 0171 629 6565

DSA Bilingual £20,000

GERMAN
Confident PA with fluent German and 2 yrs exp in trading firm environments to report to Director of Business Development. You will need to have gen. sec. skills, strong PR, organisational and presentation skills, team spirit and dynamism. This is an exc. opp. for someone with the ability to succeed.

Administrator in Japanese Department

£16,000 per annum
Administrator required to work in the Japanese Department of an exclusive retail company based in Japan. Initiating, good organisational/administrative skills as well as the ability to speak French and work with a team are the essential qualities required.

Please contact on 0181 871 3300

ACCOUNTS Fluent French plus German or Dutch, hands-on acc. exp. for cash management roles. W/London. £13,500-15k inc. vat. Multilingual Service req. comm. 0171 930 4880

ADMINISTRATIVE/RESEARCHING Support Office. If you are fluent in two European languages (including English), we want to talk to you about a challenging research and development role. Excellent Word for Windows and Excel are essential. Salary £10,000 - £12,000. Good benefits and flexible hours. Please call 0171 734 8501 or fax your CV on 0171 734 8501.

BILINGUAL French Sec for Euro div. dynamic company. Excellent typing, analysis, report, telephone skills. £12,500-15k. Full benefits. Call 0171 734 8501 or fax your CV on 0171 734 8501.

FLUENT Spanish Sec - English mvt. £12K-15K. Excellent typing, analysis, report, telephone skills. £12,500-15k. Full benefits. Call 0171 734 8501 or fax your CV on 0171 734 8501.

DUTCH speaking Credit Controller. Urgently required for 3 months by a leading international company in Holland. Previous experience in credit control. Please call Mike on 0171 390 7000 for an immediate start. Crone Corkill rec. comm.

DATA Manager £20K. Excellent opportunity to work for a leading international company in Holland. Previous experience in data management. Please call Mike on 0171 390 7000 for an immediate start. Crone Corkill rec. comm.

FLUENT Spanish Sec - English mvt. £12K-15K. Excellent typing, analysis, report, telephone skills. £12,500-15k. Full benefits. Call 0171 734 8501 or fax your CV on 0171 734 8501.

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TENNIS

Punishing trip fails to unsettle Henman

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

TIM HENMAN put jet lag and fatigue behind him to progress to the second round of the Sydney International tennis tournament yesterday with victory over Renzo Furlan, the British No.1, arrived in Australia in the early hours before the match, having taken three flights from the Middle East.

He was broken in the first game, but responded well to break Furlan, the Italy Davis Cup player, in the next game and went on to secure a 6-3, 6-4 victory just before midnight local time.

Henman, who rose to No.24 in the world last weekend, said: "I just tried to forget

second game of the match. I felt pretty comfortable. I wanted to keep the momentum going this week."

Henman now faces Sergi Bruguera, from Spain, the former French Open champion, in the second round after he defeated Felix Mantilla, his compatriot, the No.5 seed.

Henman, who was beaten by Bruguera, a clay-court specialist, in their two meetings last year, said: "He is a similar player to Furlan and won't come forward much."

The tournament is providing Henman with ideal preparation for the Australian Open that starts in Melbourne on Monday. That event has been delayed by the services of Centre Court, the French No.1, who has withdrawn with back trouble.

Monica Seles, four times the Australian Open champion, will be unable to defend her title in Melbourne because she has a broken finger. Seles, the world's No.2, broke her right ring finger in two places — the finger tip and the knuckle — while warming up for an exhibition tournament last month and has been unable to play since December 4.

Seles won her fourth Australian Open title last year, bringing her incredible match record in the event to a perfect 29-0. She also won the Australian Open in 1991, 1992 and 1993 before missing the event the next two years after being stabbed during a tournament in Hamburg in April 1993.

"I want so much to return to Australia, where I have so many happy memories and good friends," Seles said. "All I can do is look forward to 1998 with great anticipation."

The broken finger is the latest in a series of injuries that have plagued Seles since she returned to competitive tennis in August 1995.

Results ————— 44

what I had been through in the past 24 hours. When you are confident and hitting the ball well, you don't think about too much out on the court.

"My concerns before the match were mental and physical. I wasn't sure how I would feel and how focused I would be. Overall, I think it was a good performance. Tennis-wise, I hit the ball well."

Henman, 22, from Oxfordshire, was particularly glad to have bounced back after the potentially vital blow of losing the first game to Furlan, ranked 15 places below him in the world.

He added: "In the first game I had 40-15, but then didn't play particularly well. It was a bad start to the match, but, once I broke back in the

second game, I felt pretty comfortable. I wanted to keep the momentum going this week."

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Wheels of fortune: Berger has reaped extravagant rewards from his 12-year motor racing career without claiming the ultimate prize

Playboy in pursuit of home comforts

Concluding a series on the revival of the Benetton Formula One team, Oliver Holt meets a driver in a personal race against time

They say that Jean Alesi is the insecure one. When there are tears to be shed, he cries, when there is anger to be expressed, he vents it when consolation is needed. It is always his shoulders that the arm slanders around. On the other hand, the popular belief is that Gerhard Berger, his Benetton team-mate, can look after himself.

Berger is, after all, the last of the great grand prix playboys: dashing and dynamic, charming and witty, entirely likeable. He is so much his own man that he is the only driver among the leading Formula One personalities who does not have a manager. He is one of the few in the sport who talks frankly, his words unadorned by jargon, unsoftened by the fear of saying the wrong thing.

He is the man who used to play practical jokes on Ayrton Senna, who once put hundreds of frogs in the late Brazilian's room while he was out, and who, during his stays at McLaren and Ferrari, consistently managed to negotiate himself one of the highest salaries in the sport without having the bargaining power of a world title.

Before Berger left Ferrari for Benetton at the end of 1995, though, Jean Todt,

Ferrari's sporting director, and one of the most astute men in Formula One, revealed a different side of the Austrian. "He does not show it like Alesi," Todt said, "but Gerhard needs reassurance, too. He needs to be told how much he is wanted."

As he sat in the Benetton garage during a test at Estoril, in Portugal, last month, Berger, smiling as always, let his guard down for a few minutes. He is starting the second half of a two-year contract with Benetton and admitted that time was running out for him to achieve his lifelong ambition of winning the Formula One world title.

What was even more striking, though, was an admission, by a man who has always seemed so footloose and fancy-free, that, when he joined Benetton at the start of last season, he was desperate to settle down, but felt so ill at ease that it affected his performances. Only now that he has come to terms with the change, he said, will he be able to have a last shot at the championship.

"I expected it to be difficult



when I arrived here from Ferrari," Berger said. "When I came here to Estoril for my first test, I had to push myself not to show it, but I felt like a stranger. I just didn't feel at home. But here, it was different."

"It was too late to run away, but it was stopping me doing a good job. On top of that, the car wasn't set up to suit my driving style. The people were nice to me, but I was not one of them and it was just a terrible feeling."

"The older you get, the more you get used to somebody and the more difficult it is to change. If you are a young boy and you get a new

girlfriend, it is easy to adapt, you stay together and you feel fine. But, if you get to 40 or 45 and you start something new, it is so hard to get used to it."

"I just could not get used to it here. It took me half a season and by then it was too late to have any chance of winning the title. Then, suddenly I felt it was turning out OK and now, finally, I feel good. Now, I would not like to go somewhere else."

Like Alesi, Berger failed to win a race last season, but he was robbed of victory in Germany when the Renault engine in his Benetton failed on the last lap and wasted a good chance of a win in the Japanese Grand Prix, the last race of the season, when he attempted an over-ambitious overtaking manoeuvre on Damon Hill.

Berger, who flirted with the idea of retirement after Senna's death in May 1994, is 37 now and, if he does not find a drive with one of the leading four teams when his contract ends at the end of the coming season, he is likely to embrace it more openly.

At the San Marino Grand Prix, in April at Imola — the

site of his worst crash in Formula One, in 1989, when his car exploded in a fireball, and the track where Senna died — he will contest his 200th grand prix, more than any other present driver. His motivation, though, is as fierce as it was when he competed in his first race, in 1984.

"It is still clear in my mind," he said, "that I would not like to do anything more than drive a racing car. As long as it is in your head that you are doing the nicest thing in the world, then you are motivated."

"I feel much fitter today than I did when I was young, but, as a driver, if you get slower, you never feel it. You always think you are quick. I am not doing it for earning money or any ego thing. I am doing it because I love it and for winning. Otherwise, I would not have the motivation."

"I am still trying to win the title, but I am not that convinced I can do it any more. I give everything that I can give, but I am running out of time fast. I don't dream of winning the world championship next season, just of winning as many races as possible. If this dream comes true, then the championship will not be far away."

— Oliver Holt

MOTOR RACING

Ferrari go into year with sights lowered

BY OLIVER HOLT

LAST year Luca di Montezemolo, the president of Ferrari, said that 1997 would be the year when his team would win their first drivers' championship since 1979. As the new Ferrari was unveiled at their headquarters in Maranello yesterday, he said that it was now more likely to be next year.

Even Michael Schumacher, who had also said before the start of last season that he believed that this might be the year to make an all-out championship assault, was more cautious yesterday when Ferrari became the first of the big four teams to launch their new car.

"My real hope is that we can compete for the championship," Schumacher said, "and put pressure on the Williams team or any other that sets the pace. Either that or I hope we will be under pressure from them, but I cannot predict that we will be champions."

"I expected some problems in the first year, but I will not be happy if they are repeated in the second year. We are looking for reliability and a big improvement on last year, but the real championship for us should come in 1998."

Schumacher, who recently signed a deal that should keep him at Ferrari until the end of 1999, won three races for his new team last year, including a bravura performance in the rain in Barcelona for his maiden Ferrari victory, and finished third in the championship, behind Damon Hill and Jacques Villeneuve.

The pragmatism of Schumacher, who won the title with Benetton in 1994 and 1995, and the efficiency of Jean Todt, Ferrari's sporting director, has enabled the team to reverse their habit of launching their new car hopelessly late. Last season it was so plagued with mechanical problems that neither Schumacher nor Eddie Irvine, his team-mate, had any testing time in it before the opening race, in Australia.

This year Ferrari have stolen a march on Williams, Benetton and McLaren by unveiling it early and John Barnard, their unsettled English designer, admitted that the car was low on risk so that reliability could be ensured.

"There was a very big effort to get the car finished to allow plenty of time for development," Barnard said. His position in the team has been under scrutiny since the recruitment of Ross Brawn from Benetton as technical co-ordinator.

"I want to stay in Formula One," Barnard said. "I've put a lot of effort into Ferrari and I don't want to see that wasted. I always seem to leave before the final prize is won."

RUGBY UNION: JENKINS REPLACES HUMPHREYS AS HOOKER DECIDES NOT TO CONTEST SUSPENSION

Gibbs steps up to captain Wales

BY DAVID HANDS
RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

SCOTT GIBBS, one of four players who have returned from rugby league, to bolster the Wales national side, will lead his country for the first time against the United States in Cardiff on Saturday. Gibbs, the Swansea centre, will take over from the suspended Jonathan Humphreys.

Humphreys, the captain in Wales's past 13 internationals, has decided not to appeal against the week-long ban imposed after his disqualification during Cardiff's Heineken Cup semi-final defeat by Brive on Sunday. "I am mindful of the need to set an example and will accept the adjudicator's decision, even though it is very painful to take," he said yesterday.

Humphreys, 27, was sent off

for rugby's equivalent of a professional foul, having earlier received a yellow card for his involvement in a forward confrontation. His decision not to appeal leaves Wales able to prepare properly for Saturday, with Garin Jenkins, of Swansea, stepping up as his 31st cap and Barry Williams, the Neath hooker, returning to the replacements.

Iwan Evans and Gareth Llewellyn, two former Wales captains, are among the XV, but Gibbs, who has played in three of Wales's four internationals this season, is a more progressive appointment. "I have used this as an opportunity for someone to gain personal development from the situation, rather than to go for a tried and trusted captain," Kevin Bowring, the coach, said.

"I have been impressed with

Scott's focus, attitude and discipline. His contribution has been impressive since he returned from rugby league, both on and off the field."

Gibbs also has youth on his side — he is 26 later this month and would be a viable alternative if Humphreys were not to return for the opening five nations' championship match, against Scotland on January 18. The captaincy is also an indication of how swiftly Gibbs has become a cornerstone of the side as opposed to, for example, Neil Jenkins — who is captain of Pontypridd but is being played out of position at full back.

"My job now is to lead us to victory and thrust us into the five nations' championship on the back of a good performance," Gibbs said. "There is a responsibility on the shoulders of every player and, as

captain, that responsibility is no different."

"This is a personal landmark for me, although I have been assured it is a temporary position because of Jonathan's suspension; but it is a chance for me to develop as a Welsh captain in the longer term."

Meanwhile, Llanelli are to hold an extraordinary meeting on January 29 after the collapse of the financial structure intended to carry them through the first season of full professionalism. They will be among the first division clubs eager to hear today from the Welsh Rugby Union the results of a specially-commissioned independent report on club finances, which may help them to explain to their members at the end of the month how they plan to sustain their existence for the rest of this season.

Greening attracts offers from rich clubs

THE Gloucester board of management will discuss on Monday the possibility of a substantial financial offer for Phil Greening, their young hooker, who won his first England cap as a replacement against Italy in November (David Hands writes).

There is no likelihood of Greening, who is Gloucester-born and bred, leaving the club halfway through a season vital to the club's first division survival. Neither club officials nor the player himself would countenance it, but the reality for Gloucester, who have no wealthy individual investing money in them, is that the sale of so promising a player would help to sustain the playing side of the club as a whole.

Greening, 21, is said to have had offers from the four wealthy London clubs, as well as Newcastle. He is England's replacement hooker, behind Mark Regan, a position that will be confirmed today when England name their training squad for the five nations' championship match against Scotland on February 1.

Adedayo Adebayo, the England wing, returns for Bath against Swansea tonight after recovering from concussion. He will be joined in the team by Andy Robinson, Bath's new coach, and Graham Dawe, who has recovered from an elbow injury sustained nearly two months ago.

BASEBALL

Home run for Dodgers?

FROM QUENTIN LETTS IN NEW YORK

ONE of American baseball's great teams, the Dodgers, is up for sale. Peter O'Malley, president of the Dodgers and son of the man who, in 1957, moved the team from Brooklyn to Los Angeles, said this week that it was "the right time to sell". He added: "The time is approaching when a family cannot support a Major League baseball team. It is the time of corporate ownership. Family ownership is probably a dying breed."

O'Malley's unexpected announcement created excitement in the New York borough of Brooklyn, where old Dodgers fans were given hope that the team might return to the east coast of the United States. The Dodgers' departure left a terrible void

and the O'Malley family took much heat. The elder O'Malley became known as Peter "Sonofabitch" O'Malley, and to this day people say that the borough has not been the same since the old stadium in Flatbush fell dark.

Marty Adler, who runs the Brooklyn Dodger Hall of Fame, said: "I'm so happy, I can't believe this is happening. Bring him back to Brooklyn. There was no proof of a financial offer to do that, but the asking price for the Dodgers is likely to be around the \$200 million mark."

When the Dodgers were based in Brooklyn, they won the World Series once and ten National League titles. Leading players included Jackie Robinson, Duke Snider,

Sandy Koufax and Pee Wee Reese. Since moving out west, however, the team has done even better, scooping five World Series titles and nine National League pennants.

Such was the myth that attached to Brooklyn Dodgers that, in the recent presidential election campaign, Robert Dole, the Republican party candidate, mistakenly referred to the team. Dole was lampooned for being so out of touch that he did not know the Dodgers had moved to Los Angeles. Now his gaffe may, perhaps, be seen as prescient.

O'Malley's comments about the impossibility of families running baseball teams were interpreted as a caustic reference to the vast salaries demanded by leading players.

RUGBY LEAGUE

Arrivals bolster Salford ambition

NOT all the overseas players flooding the English game possess the pedigree that John Cartwright will bring to Salford Reds in their first season in the Stones Super League (Christopher Irvine writes). Cartwright, the Australian second row forward, was reunited on his arrival at the Willows yesterday with Andy Platt, an adversary from the 1992 World Cup.

Cartwright, 30, and Platt, 33, the former Great Britain prop, will bring valuable experience to a relatively young Salford side. To capture a player still regarded as being among the best props in the

world is a sign of the ambition at Salford.

Cartwright — who has played for Penrith for 12 seasons — has a contract for a year with a 12-month option. Wigan wanted Platt to return to them in a coaching capacity, but Platt felt that he played some of his best rugby at Auckland Warriors last season and he has a two-year deal at Salford.

Cartwright, who made seven appearances for Australia, has no regrets about leaving a divided game in his home country. "Hopefully, it will be sorted out in the next 12 months, otherwise the game

could be in a bit of trouble," he said.

Andy Gregory, the Salford coach, said: "I wish I had a pound for everyone who has said we'll struggle this year. We're getting a decent squad together, we haven't finished yet, and I think we'll surprise a few."

Kelvin Skerrett, 30, Platt's former Wigan colleague, has joined Halifax Blue Sox until the end of March. Before committing itself for the rest of the season, the club wants to see how Skerrett, who has had surgery on his ankles, performs in the early rounds of the Silk Cut Challenge Cup.

One man, three camels, 1,000 miles too far

Travel, people tell me, broadens the mind, but for some time I've had a pet theory that what travel actually does is the opposite. Some of the duller people I have ever met turn out to be the most intrepid of travellers, great globe-trotters who never managed to get a life but got a long-haul destination instead.

No prizes, then, for guessing that Benedict Allen is not my kind of chap: nor *Skeletons Coast* (BBC2) my kind of programme. Allen, you see, is the worst kind of traveller, the one who insists on showing you his holiday snaps. "I wanted to film it myself," he told us grandly, "without the intrusion of a camera crew." That's right — no director to tell him he's beginning to sound like an encyclopedia, no camera operator to make the whole thing look pretty, no sound technician to muffle the heavy breathing. "Filmed entirely by Benedict Allen," boasted the end

credits. I guess that makes it his fault then.

Long gone are the days when "because it's there" was sufficient excuse to get the rucksack out of the attic. When the rucksack multi-media explorer needs is an idea sufficiently offbeat to get television interested and perhaps a publisher or two. Allen's idea was to travel the 1,000 miles of the Skeleton Coast of Namibia, an area already crawling with wildlife documentary-makers, in the company of three camels. They bought it.

First up, inevitably, was choosing your camel time, a sequence that took up so much of last night's programme that it made me wonder whether there is sufficient material for six programmes. Anyway, Allen got his camels and a collection of matching bruises and I warmed to the documentary which smashed the camels with a well aimed blow of the knee. "We may make a critic out of him yet,"

Eventually, after an awful lot of self-conscious growling in the bath and mock introspection in the desert — "things die out here. I'm going to die out here" — we got these camels in order. "I don't get off. The Orange River was behind me now it was just Allen and his three camels, and Tony, the warden the Namibian Government had insisted came too. Adrian, a photographer friend, and Henry, driver of a so far unseen support vehicle. As Allen had promised us, the Namib Desert was already teeming with life.

So, too, were the spectacular gardens that provided the centrepiece for Geoff Hamilton's *Paradise Gardens* (BBC2). But any notion that sufficient time might have elapsed since Hamilton's death last summer for this series to be viewed dispassionately were quickly dispelled. A caption reminded us that Hamilton died

REVIEW



Matthew Bond

just before the series was completed and that those parts of the script left unrecorded had now been added by Tony, Geoff's twin brother.

But if that wasn't enough to bring on an unseasonal attack of hay fever, it quickly became clear that the subject was Hamilton's last series was about the garden as a earthly paradise, as an escape from the brutal demands of the

modern world. Lines such as "if we're going to cope with the modern machines, we all need a safety valve" acquired a poignancy that he can never have intended.

But somewhere along the line, the programme lost sight of its target. Of the three gardens Hamilton visited, only one — a glorious back garden in Cardiff — offered the genuine "haven of peace and contentment" that he had been talking about. The others, an exquisite cottage garden in Oxfordshire, a garden by the same couple for decades and a woodland garden in an Anglican priory, seemed so far removed from the modern world as to be irrelevant. But as fate had it, in one Hamilton touched gently on death and in the other discussed God (via a visit to a stinging nettle, actually) and suddenly relevance didn't much matter any more. After you with the anti-histamine.

Things got a little jollier thank-

fully, with the return of Harry Enfield and Chums (BBC1). But perhaps not as jolly as they once might have been. The main problem is that the chums, Paul Whitehouse and Kathy Burke, are almost better known now than Enfield is. One possible solution would be for *The Fast Show*, Whitehouse's principal vehicle, to launch a takeover bid for Enfield, but that is probably far too straightforward for the world of light entertainment.

The fact remains, however, that the shows have very similar formats and, on the evidence of last night, a growing overlap in characters. Julio Geordio may be a Colombian footballer playing for Newcastle United, but his increasingly Geordie dialogue was just a *teletalk* away from *The Fast Show's* Channel 9. Others, such as the toddlers, owe their inspiration

closer to home. After all, Kevin the teenager is still very funny, so why not his three-year-old brother? I don't know, but he wasn't. Still, Mr Dead, the Talking Corpse, was.

Back on BBC2, *Grown Ups* looked a promising idea but it may take a few weeks to see whether it has been well enough executed. I have a nasty, but not irreversible, feeling that it has not.

With the exception of Pippa Haywood, who is in everything at the moment, most of the faces involved are unfamiliar — which is a good and commendable thing. So, too, is a comedy about a group of university friends now in their thirties. My doubts though centre on the cleverness and wit, or otherwise, of Paul Makin's scripts and on the directing of Angela de Chastell Smith. It may be early days, but both the "sit" and the "com" were moving rather slowly last night. Just like those camels.

- BBC1**
- 6.00am BUSINESS BREAKFAST (48953)
7.00am BBC BREAKFAST NEWS (43311)
9.00am BREAKFAST NEWS EXTRA (400788)
9.20am ALL OVER THE SHOP (807735)
9.40am KILROY (126731)
10.00am CANT COOK, WON'T COOK (88311)
11.00am NEWS (T) and weather (866063)
11.05am THE REALLY USEFUL SHOW (518940)
11.45am SMILLIE'S PEOPLE (834733)
12.00am NEWS (T) and weather (715882)
12.05pm INCOGNITO (839886)
12.30pm CALL MY BLUFF (402022)
12.55pm THE WEATHER SHOW (754408)
1.00pm NEWS (T) and weather (83798)
1.30pm REGIONAL NEWS (4417882)
1.40pm NEIGHBOURS (T) (742677)
2.00pm POLICE RESCUE (807587)
2.50pm HOLIDAY OUTINGS (731808)
3.00pm PUT IT TO THE TEST (1663)
3.30pm PLAYDAYS (302740) 4.30
ChuckleVision (301457) 5.10 Popeye and Son (181015) 4.35 The Wild House (702893) 5.00 Newsworld (T) (8137507)
5.10 Blue Peter (T) (1021834)
5.35pm NEIGHBOURS (T) (818775)
6.00pm NEWS (T) and weather (353)
6.30pm REGIONAL NEWS (311)
7.00pm A QUESTION OF SPORT Johnnie Walker, Steve Backley, Peter Ebdon, Tim Hurren and John Higgins (T) (81721)
7.30pm TOMORROW'S WORLD Includes an innovative head-mounted sensor device giving blind people a view of the world, and a submarine designer's latest creation, which he hopes will revolutionise underwater tourism (T) (595)
8.00pm HOW DO THEY DO THAT? Emma Holmes and Esther McVey reveal how massive, deadly snow avalanches can be stopped (834708)
8.55pm PARTY POLITICAL BROADCAST by the Liberal Democrats (T) (126412)
9.00pm NEWS (T) and weather (1309)
9.30pm COMMON AS MUCK The first in a new six-part series finds the barmen gathering to give New a good retirement send-off, fully aware that their business is under threat and they may have to find new ways to survive. With Edward Woodward (T) (81782)
10.25pm THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH: Gold Plated — Atlanta 1996 The backstage chaos that ensued throughout last year's Olympic games (566407)
11.30pm FILM: School Ties (1993) starring Chris O'Donnell, Matt Damon and Brendan Fraser. A wealthy Jewish student enrols at an elite high school where he has to lie about his faith to escape taunting from anti-Semitic bigots. Directed by Robert Minkoff (210882)
1.10am FILM: Signpost to Murder (1964, b/w) starring Joanne Woodward and Stuart Whitman. A convicted murderer escapes from an asylum and seeks refuge in the house of a lonely young woman, where he convinces her he is innocent and sane. Directed by George Englund (4758557)
2.25pm WEATHER (1061977)

VideoPlus+ and the Video PlusCode
The numbers next to each TV programme listing are Video PlusCodes, numbers which allow you to programme your video recorder to record a programme. To find the Video PlusCode for the programme you wish to record, VideoPlus+ (T), VideoPlus (T) and Video Programme are underlined at Gannett Development Ltd.

- BBC2**
- 7.15pm SEE HEAR BREAKFAST NEWS (834224) 7.30 The Hair Bear Bunch (280301) 7.55 Record Breakers Gold (280715) 8.20 Today Trucks (331504) 8.35 Spot (863444) 8.35 Lassie (374731)
9.00pm DAYTIME ON TWO: JEUNES FRANCOIS (805137) 9.25 See You, See Me (408434) 9.45 Words and Pictures (858403) 10.00 (72773) 10.30 Numberline (814108) 10.45 Cats' Eyes (813824) 11.00 Around Scotland (826872) 11.20 Music Makers (553155) 11.40 Talking Isaac (833753) 12.00 Spanish Globo (715824) 12.05pm History File, 20th Century Wipe (834408) 12.30 Working Lunch (37175) 1.00pm Geography Programme (8041355) 1.20 Thunderbirds in French (8808972) 1.25 Zig Zag (8042538) 1.45 Come Outside (4413455) 2.00 Today Trucks (887272) 2.05 Spot (8728243) 2.10 The Champions (T) (555446)
3.00pm NEWS AND WEATHER (855506)
3.05pm DARTS: WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP (T) (136358)
6.00pm STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION (T) (828972)
6.45pm TREV AND SIMON'S TRANSMISSION IMPOSSIBLE (505427)
7.00pm HANCOCK: THE SET THAT FAILED (b/w) (T) (4514)
7.30pm ALVIN HALL'S GUIDE TO SUCCESSFUL INVESTING A three-part guide for beginners to investment presented by American financial wizard Alvin Hall (137)
8.00pm DELIA SMITH'S WINTER COLLECTION Comfort foods and pleasures (T) (8214)
8.30pm RICK STEIN'S FRUITS OF THE SEA The first of a new six-part series on seafood. On the menu tonight are seafood pasta, spicy Thai fish curry and a dish of locally caught baby scallops for the Padstow Festival (T) (808)
9.00pm TIGER CRISIS — UPDATE! Gavin Hewitt returns to India for a harrowing report on the plight of the majestic Indian tiger (T) (85243)
9.30pm TROUBLE AT THE TOP First of a six-part series following businessmen over a year in their hectic lives, beginning with Sir Freddie Laker as he prepares to launch Laker Airline, a transatlantic service between Britain and Florida (T) (566137)
10.30pm PARTY POLITICAL BROADCAST: Liberal Democrats (T) (12524)
10.35pm NEWSNIGHT with Peter Snow (T) (435088)
11.20pm THIS LIFE Drama series (T) (T) (461663)
12.05am-1.15am DARTS: WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP (711924)



Freddie Laker flying again (9.30pm)

- CHOICE**
- Hollywood Lovers**
ITV, 9.00pm (not YTV/C3NE)
Should you be thinking of moving to the film capital, and finding yourself in need of a partner, this programme is full of useful advice. The good news for men, according to a dating agency, is that there are more beautiful women in Los Angeles than anywhere else in the world. The bad news is that a male lonely heart who has reached not just date you — they date your job, your pocket book and your car. "If you are a woman trying to pull a man, listen to Denise Gilbert. As Ms Film USA, she knows all the angles. This latest collection of slickly-edited soundbites, comes from the company responsible for series on Hollywood's men, women, children and pets. Like its predecessors, *Hollywood Lovers* is brash, superficial, vulgar and horribly fascinating — a fair description of Hollywood itself.
- Common As Muck**
BBC1, 9.30pm
The Lancashire barmen are back, but as William Ivory's drama series enters its second series it seems that they might not be emptying bins much longer. Property developers have their sights on the yard and the men are forced to think up new ways to earn a living. They also have to do without Edward Woodward, who has reached retirement age. But even as he says his emotional farewell, you can bet that the show will not dump one of its best characters. A feature of Ivory's scripts is that they can encompass a range of moods without this evening including a former comedy as Muck is fundamentally a comedy and there is plenty of knockabout tonight as the gang tries its hand at window cleaning. But there is pathos and sentimentality, and darker elements as well. It makes a satisfying mix.
- Trouble At The Top: Freddie's Back**
BBC2, 9.30pm
Freddie is Sir Freddie Laker, trying to make a comeback 16 years after the crash of his pioneering venture in cut-price air travel. Although well into his seventies, and with a serious operation not far behind him, he is as buoyant as ever. His big idea this time is an airline that will take British holidaymakers to the Florida coast. And in contrast to his past activity he is going unarmoured. Passengers will sit in leather seats, with individual video screens, and eat off china plates. That, at least, is the idea. As Mary Fitzpatrick's engrossing film reveals, the launch of Laker Mark Two is so dogged with mishaps of every sort that it is a wonder whether it will get off the ground. You almost feel sorry for Sir Freddie, but he battles on regardless and even in his lowest moments an optimistic smile rarely leaves his face.
- ER: Dr Carter, I Presume**
Channel 4, 10.00pm
The Chicago hospital drama does not hang on Dr Carter, but on the fact that he is the third season in we are plunged into young Dr Carter's first day as a surgical intern. Jeanie's discovery that she is HIV-positive and rumours of the hospital being earmarked for closure. The last can be quickly dismissed. If the place shut, it would be the end of the series. As there are 23 episodes after this one, it is a fair assumption that the rumours are no more than a plot device. Carter's baptism is a predictable descent into Hell, though charted with all the gritty realism that ER can muster. And so to poor Carter, who is a former medical student, the authorities about her condition, makes for moments of sober reflection amid the bustle and frenzy, underlined as always by a manically restless camera. Peter Waymark

- HTV**
- 6.00pm GMTV (192885)
9.25pm WIN, LOSE OR DRAW (84575)
9.55pm REGIONAL NEWS (565175)
10.00pm THE TIME, THE PLACE (8217)
10.30pm THIS MORNING (5341535)
12.20pm REGIONAL NEWS (716255)
12.30pm NEWS (T) and weather (452717)
12.55pm SHORTLAND STREET (4032408) 1.25 Home and Away (T) (8041048) 1.50 Afternoon Live (7424311) 2.20 Vanessa (T) (8287021) 2.50 Afternoon Live (592895)
3.20pm NEWS (565235)
3.25pm REGIONAL NEWS (555433)
3.30pm TOTVS TV (894531) 3.40 The Ebbas New series 3.50 The Lark's Mamma (302324) 4.15 The Sylvester and Tweety Mysteries (180455) 4.40 Youth New series (607284)
5.10pm CELEBRITY SQUARES (230750)
5.40pm NEWS (T) and weather (324652)
6.00pm HOME AND AWAY (T) (816250)
6.25pm HTV NEWS (T) (40137)
7.00pm EMMERDALE (T) (1040)
7.30pm CORONATION STREET (T) (623)
8.00pm O'CONNOR TONIGHT Tonight's guest include Sir Anthony Hopkins, Anthea Turner, Antonio Banderas and Freddie Starr (5953)
9.00pm HOLLYWOOD LOVERS A host of stars provide a first-hand insight into the Timesonline dating game (T) (5717)
10.00pm PARTY POLITICAL BROADCAST By the Liberal Democrats (T) (840137)
10.05pm NEWS (T) and weather (281972)
10.35pm REGIONAL NEWS (826448)
10.45pm WEST MATCH PLUS Highlights from the weekend sporting action (17041137)
11.40pm HUNTER: Crossfire Hunter's plan to marry a former girlfriend is shattered when she is killed by a bullet he believes was meant for him (319446)
12.45pm COLLINS AND MACONIE'S MOVIE CLUB New series Andrew Collins and Stuart Macdonald present an offbeat review of the latest film and video releases (18489)
1.15pm FILM: Convicted (1986) starring Lindsay Wagner, Carroll O'Connor and John Larroquette. A mail carrier is wrongly convicted for the rape of three women. Five years into his sentence another man confesses to the crimes. Following his exoneration, the innocent man demands to be declared fully innocent rather than pardoned. Directed by David Lowell Rich (650170)
3.00pm THE CHART SHOW (T) (4754267) 3.55 Football Extra (T) (8655113) 4.30 The Time, The Place (T) (86373) 5.00 Coronation Street (T) (12977) 5.30 News



Stephanie Beacham on dating (9.00)

- CENRA**
- As HTV West except:
12.55pm-1.25pm COUNTRY PRACTICE (4032408)
5.10-5.40 SHORTLAND STREET (8280750)
6.25-7.00 CENTRAL NEWS (440137)
10.45 CRIME STALKER (266069)
11.45 BEYOND REALITY (802156)
12.00pm COLLINS AND MACONIE'S MOVIE CLUB (564806)
12.50pm FILM: FIRST MONDAY IN OCTOBER (1981) A comedy starring Bill Clayburgh and Walter Matthau, directed by Ronald Neame (651373)
2.35pm THE CHART SHOW (729915)
3.30pm DEAR NICK (25557)
4.30pm CENTRAL JOBBING '97 (1705644)
5.20pm ASIAN EYE (5684064)
WESTCOUNTRY
As HTV West except:
12.20pm-12.30pm ILLUMINATIONS (7154868)
12.55-1.25pm EMMERDALE (4032408)
1.50-5.40 HOME AND AWAY (8280750)
6.00-7.00 WESTCOUNTRY LIVE (35232)
10.45pm THE WEST COUNTRY MATCH (266069)
11.45pm HUNTER (255953)
MERIDIAN
As HTV West except:
12.55-1.25pm COUNTRY PRACTICE (4032408)
5.10-5.40 HOME AND AWAY (8280750)
6.00pm MERIDIAN TONIGHT (427)
6.30-7.00 BIRDWATCH WITH CHRIS PACKHAM (779)
10.45pm THE MERIDIAN MATCH (266069)
11.45pm ALFRED HITCHCOCK PRESENTS (25553)
5.00pm FREESCREEN (12977)
ANGLIA
As HTV West except:
12.19pm ANGLIA AIR WATCH (7166601)
12.55-1.25pm CROSSWITS (4032408)
5.10-5.40 SHORTLAND STREET (8280750)
6.25-7.00 ANGLIA NEWS (440137)
10.00-10.05pm PPS BY THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATS (840137)
10.33pm ANGLIA AIR WATCH (162750)
10.45pm FILM: OBSESSION (1976) A thriller starring Cliff Robertson, Genevieve Bujard and John Lithgow. Directed by Brian De Palma (161585)
S4C
Starts: 6.00pm SESAME STREET (31663)
7.00pm THE BIG BREAKFAST (36021) 8.00pm HANGING WITH COOPER (82137) 9.30pm SCOTLAND (834137) 12.00pm AUSTRALIA WILD (56501) 12.30pm HERE'S ONE I MADE EARLIER (22243) 1.00pm SUT MEITHIRN (46408) 1.30pm FILM: CAN-CAN (74408) 4.00pm THE FIGHT FOR HEARTS AND MINDS (352)
4.30pm GREAT LITTLE THINGS (570) 5.00pm NEWS (8445) 5.30pm COUNTDOWN (153) 6.00pm NEWSDAY (79979) 6.05pm HENO (186156)
6.35pm GAI AM AIR (806791) 7.00pm POBOL Y CWYM (28427) 7.25pm FFERmio (703525) 7.55pm NEWSDAY (70137) 8.00pm HAWLIO (8330)
8.30pm NEWSDAY (4137) 9.00pm ST BENEWDY (82555) 9.30pm UNDERGROUND (73523) 10.35pm ER (86224) 11.30pm CAROLINE IN THE CITY (29243) 12.00pm UNDER THE MOON: Sports magazine (4388773) 2.20pm AMERICAN FOOTBALL: THE PLAYOFFS (268809) 4.20pm TRANS WORLD SPORT (576606)
P4MOUNT
6.00pm Family Ties (1994) 7.30pm Benson (1980) 8.00pm Entertainment UK (562) 8.30pm Remington Steele (171222) 9.00pm Department 56 (197175) 9.30pm Space 1999 (401995) 4.00pm FILM: Sam Whiskey (826156) 6.00pm Thunderbirds (8021196) 7.00pm The Champions (832401) 8.00pm Alan Partridge (830001) 9.00pm The Persuaders (830288) 10.00-12.00pm The Nightingales (401824)
UK LIVING
6.00pm Kinky (235971) 6.50pm Travel Pursuit (1800446) 7.00pm Turnabout (493738) 7.40pm Young and Restless (5611224) 8.00pm Rhoads (829203) 9.00pm Clapbacks (196330) 9.10pm Gaborie (431317) 10.05pm Jerry Springer (802888) 11.00pm Young and Restless (236588) 11.35pm Brokeback Mountain (1891311) 12.05pm Call the Doctor (1875321) 12.55pm Tempest (5234137) 1.45pm Gordon Elliot (8018224) 2.30pm Agony (8301040) 3.00pm Live at Three (8303040) 4.00pm The Bill (197137) 5.00pm Lingo (7878131) 5.30pm Lady Ladd (802156) 6.00pm Dream of Jeanne (802156) 6.35pm Ready, Steady, Cook (547135) 7.05pm Brokeback Mountain (1891311) 7.40pm What's New? (801381) 8.05pm Rovers (801206) 9.00pm FILM: Bay Cove (808721) 11.00pm-12.00pm Sports II (891362)
FAMILY CHANNEL
5.00pm Blockbusters (5682) 5.30pm Thru-

- SPANISH**
- 6.00am SESAME STREET (31663) 7.00pm The Big Breakfast (36021) 8.00pm HANGING WITH COOPER (82137) 9.30pm SCOTLAND (834137) 12.00pm AUSTRALIA WILD (56501) 12.30pm HERE'S ONE I MADE EARLIER (22243) 1.00pm SUT MEITHIRN (46408) 1.30pm FILM: CAN-CAN (74408) 4.00pm THE FIGHT FOR HEARTS AND MINDS (352)
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8.30pm NEWSDAY (4137) 9.00pm ST BENEWDY (82555) 9.30pm UNDERGROUND (73523) 10.35pm ER (86224) 11.30pm CAROLINE IN THE CITY (29243) 12.00pm UNDER THE MOON: Sports magazine (4388773) 2.20pm AMERICAN FOOTBALL: THE PLAYOFFS (268809) 4.20pm TRANS WORLD SPORT (576606)
5.30-6.00pm BACKDATE (T) (53624)
6.00am ER The first episode of a new series sees Noah Wyle now working as an intern and feeling overconfident. As the night wears on his confidence begins to ebb away (T) (8446)
11.00pm FRIENDS: The One with Ross's New Girlfriend When Chandler informs Rachel that Ross has loved her since their high school days, she rushes to the airport to meet him, only to discover that he has a new girlfriend (T) (8334)
11.30pm CHEERS: And God Created Woodman Since Diana's departure Lark has sold the watering hole to a large corporation which has installed a new manager who is rather frosty. With Ted, Dan and Kristie Alibi (T) (28243)
12.00pm UNDER THE MOON Invites viewers to phone in to argue with sportsmen and women about their passion (120544)
2.30pm AMERICAN FOOTBALL: THE PLAYOFFS (268809)
4.20pm TRANS WORLD SPORT (576606)
5.30-6.00pm BACKDATE (T) (53624)



Noah Wyle as Dr Carter (10.00pm)

- For more comprehensive listings of satellite and cable channels, see the Directory, published on Saturday**
- SKY1**
- 6.00pm The Morning Mail (84258) 8.00pm Desperate Housewives (84258) 9.00pm World's Funniest Home Videos (84258) 10.00pm The World's Funniest Home Videos (84258) 11.00pm The World's Funniest Home Videos (84258) 12.00pm The World's Funniest Home Videos (84258) 1.00pm The World's Funniest Home Videos (84258) 2.00pm The World's Funniest Home Videos (84258) 3.00pm The World's Funniest Home Videos (84258) 4.00pm The World's Funniest Home Videos (84258) 5.00pm The World's Funniest Home Videos (84258) 6.00pm The World's Funniest Home Videos (84258) 7.00pm The World's Funniest Home Videos (84258) 8.00pm The World's Funniest Home Videos (84258) 9.00pm The World's Funniest Home Videos (84258) 10.00pm The World's Funniest Home Videos (84258) 11.00pm The World's Funniest Home Videos (84258) 12.00pm The World's Funniest Home Videos (84258) 1.00pm The World's Funniest Home Videos (84258) 2.00pm The World's Funniest Home Videos (84258) 3.00pm The World's Funniest Home Videos (84258) 4.00pm The 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FOOTBALL 44

Vega signs for Tottenham in £3.7 million deal

SPORT

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 8 1997

MOTOR RACING 45

Wheels of fortune still turning for playboy of the track



Hill resigns as supporters plan matchday protest

Forest tumbling towards turmoil

By RICHARD HOBSON

THE troubles of Nottingham Forest deepened yesterday when Alan Hill, the general manager, ended his 25-year association with the club and walked out of the City Ground. He accused the shareholders who blocked a takeover bid on Monday night of putting their own interests before the club's, and offered a warning to Stuart Pearce, the caretaker player-manager, about the pitfalls of assembling a successful staff.

As Hill, hitherto one of the most welcoming faces at the club, highlighted the spiralling decline that has sent Forest to nineteenth place in the FA Carling Premiership, supporters began to organise protests to be staged at the home game against Chelsea on Saturday.

On Monday night more than 50 supporters shouted abuse at shareholders leaving the extraordinary meeting after declining to give the necessary 75 per cent backing to an offer from a local

consortium, headed by Sandy Anderson, to buy the club. Anderson would have made £13 million available to Pearce, but there would have been no immediate cash for shareholders.

The club must now wait until next month before considering a submission from a second consortium, which includes Nigel Wray, the man whose money has transformed Saracens rugby football club, and Irving Scholar, the former Tottenham Hotspur chairman.



Pearce, left, and Wray are at the centre of Forest intrigue

They would inject £15 million — in the form of an £11 million payment and a £4 million loan — straightaway, but also offer £13.546 to each shareholder who decided to sell his stake, bought for £1.

Hill will be able to retain his own share even though he is becoming an assistant to Frank Clark, in charge at Forest until three weeks ago, but now manager at Manchester City. Hill voted in favour of the Anderson bid, and confirmed that the shareholders' decision helped to

swing the balance towards him accepting an offer that Clark made three days ago.

He said: "The 79 who voted against [Hill] were in favour of the good of the club, then fair enough. If, as I think, they voted for their own gain, then it is a sad state of affairs. I want to keep my share, but if any money comes from it, I will give it back to the club for youth development."

Anderson said: "We wanted all of the money to go to the club, but some of the shareholders wanted it to go into their pockets. They obviously have different principles."

Police are already bracing themselves for a difficult afternoon on Saturday. Chief Superintendent Eddie Curtis, the divisional commander responsible for football policing, said: "It is a high-profile game, we are aware of issues surrounding the bids and will take those into account."

When news broke last September that the club would be sold, it seemed unthinkable that the issue would remain unresolved in the new year. It will now outlast the pantomimes of *Dick Whittington* and *Peter Pan* that are about to finish their runs at the city's two theatres. Indeed, only the resurgence of the side in the five games since Pearce assumed the reins from Clark has prevented the issue degenerating further.

Hill, though, became the first man to cast doubt on Pearce when he said: "I have the impression that he did not want me. If he is going to take the job permanently, he will want his own people around him, but he needs experience as well. Where young managers make the mistake is by bringing in their friends, but without experience in the administrative side, they fall by. I hope he has the good sense to realise that."

He criticised the board for removing Fred Reacher as chairman after the annual meeting last October, citing that decision as "the first mistake". Reacher appeared relaxed yesterday as he sat at the back of the trophy room where Hill spoke to the press. In contrast, Irving Korn, his successor, cut a distressed figure after the meeting on Monday, barely able to read a prepared statement calling for a swift resolution to the issue.

Pearce appears to be thriving on the challenge and is likely to accept the manager's post for the remainder of the season. "The extra responsibility has not affected my game so far," he said, denying that Nigel Clough, on loan from City, would be his assistant. "Losing Alan is a real blow and I am surprised he thought I did not want him. As for the takeover, I try to distance myself from what is going on behind the scenes. That is becoming more difficult with each day."

wanted," Anderson said. "When I was at school, £11 million was more than £1 million."

The decision by a significant minority of Forest's 209 shareholders to reject a certain offer in favour of a lower bid not yet on the table apparently hinged on what proportion of the shares was to be left in their hands.

The Anderson team said that it would take 95 per cent of the company, while Wray's group said it would only take 80 per cent and leave the rest with the present shareholders. With £10 million of debts and losses put at £13 million a year, neither side thinks that Forest is in very good health financially.

However, the Wray team also hinted at a flotation later this season. City financiers who have looked at Forest's books think that this is impossible. "My local golf club has better accounting systems," said one banker said.

Other possible bids, from Grant Bovey, the video entrepreneur, and a consortium of investors from the United States, have also been mentioned. That Nigel Wray, a cricket and rugby enthusiast, should be interested in Forest is an indication of the excitement that the City has for national sports. Celtic, Manchester United and Caspian, which owns Leeds United, were among the dozen best-performing shares in 1996 and Sunderland and West Bromwich Albion stormed ahead on their flotations. Southampton, Newcastle United and Coventry City have all said that they are coming to the market.

Villeneuve puts brake on Hill's title defence

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

JACQUES VILLENEUVE, of Canada, who finished runner-up to Damon Hill in the Formula One world championship last season, has dismissed Hill's chances of similar success in 1997 and believes that this time he will go one better and take the title.

Because Hill is now with a new team, TWR Arrows, Villeneuve does not rate his chances so highly. Last season, with Villeneuve threatening to pounce, the title went to a final, thrilling race in Japan, which Hill won.

Villeneuve yesterday told BBC Radio 5 Live: "I don't think he's going to be an opponent, but he is very good. It's just I don't think the whole package is ready to win — although I'm sure they could surprise us once in a while."

"I am going in with the championship in mind. There is only one spot better I can go and I will have to work hard to make sure I get that spot."

Villeneuve has already tried out his new car, which has been adapted, with several changes suggested by him. He believes that the toughest

competition will come from Heinz-Harald Frentzen, his team-mate, and Michael Schumacher's Ferrari.

"Heinz will be a tough adversary. I'm pretty sure Michael Schumacher will be very tough to beat as well, and you never know what's going to happen with the McLaren and the Benetton, so it's going to be a tough championship," he said.

"From another team, Ferrari will be the opposition, the one we will have to work against."

Villeneuve said that, if he did manage to win the title, he would not spend much time dwelling on his achievement.

"It would be great," he said, "but, a week later, you would forget about it and think about the season ahead."

"It's what happened after winning the Indy 500 and the IndyCar championship. You can't just sit on what you have done for months, and live on that."

Hill's new Arrows car is to be unveiled at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham tomorrow.



From left, Sir Richard, Border, Hughes and Tomu'u, the successful bowler, right, congratulate Drumm on her catch

Atherton swallows Drumm stick

From MICHAEL HENDERSON IN AUCKLAND

IT NEVER rains on Michael Atherton, the England captain, at the moment, but it absolutely tips it down on his head. He went to bed on Monday afternoon jet lagged, woke up in the early hours of Tuesday morning, was unable to sleep throughout the rest of a wretched night, went to the gym just to pass the time, and never got above half-awake all day.

With a certain weariness, he pattered along to the Ericsson Stadium, the home of Auckland Warriors rugby league team, to take part in a benefit match under floodlights for Danny Morrison, the New Zealand fast bowler who was a team-mate of Atherton's at Lancashire in 1992. Perhaps he should never have left his hotel room, because he was caught in the deep by the only woman playing in the match.

It was not a proper match by any accepted standards. Bowlers walked up to the stumps off three paces, fielders stopped the ball with their feet, and a cast list that included Sir Richard Hadlee, Allan Border, Merv Hughes and Aravinda De Silva was turning out for a lark.

Atherton, slogging out in a manner contrary to his natural game, gave a catch in the deep to Emily Drumm, 25, a member of the New Zealand women's cricket team. The successful bowler was Ofisa

Tomu'u, one of the rugby league players in the motley gathering.

It was no fun for Atherton, but provided tremendous entertainment for the crowd. Supplied with their Danny Morrison "duck-callers", a convincing-sounding mouth-piece named after one of the international king of the scoreless innings, the spectators quack-quacked the England captain back to the dressing-room. It really was a bit of a circus and, for those few

Simon Barnes 46
Taylor's trials 46

moments, Atherton wore the reddest nose.

He is not downcast about life far from it. Atherton looks and sounds healthy and happy, even in these dark days when he might be excused a touch of self-doubt. "I am thoroughly enjoying my cricket," he said, "and I'm looking forward to the New Zealand part of the winter tour. It is a pleasant place and the people are friendly. It should be a good trip."

As for his batting form, which deserted him in Zimbabwe, he is concerned but not alarmed. "There is no magic formula to putting it right except a good, strong attitude and hard work," he said.

"I've not been playing well for a year now and there are

technical problems to address, but I'm working hard at correcting some faults. It won't be for want of trying."

As Atherton prepared for his evening's light entertainment, other members of the England party went up-river on a boat. After two days off, they practise today at Eden Gardens before travelling to New Plymouth tomorrow for the one-day match against an Invitation XI on Friday.

For one night, then, Drumm became a star of sorts — always according to that, to be caught by a woman in a beer match, amounts to "humiliation". According to Barbara Daniels, the vice-captain of the England women's team and executive director of the Women's Cricket Association, Atherton should feel no shame.

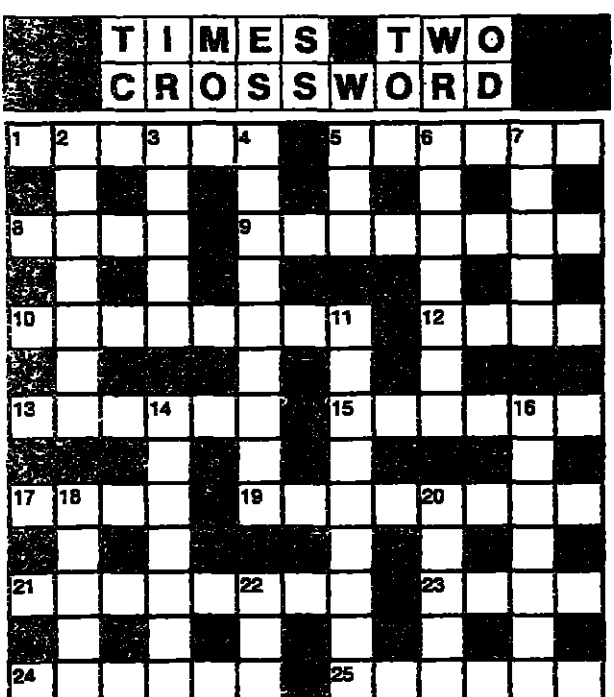
"On her day, Emily is one of the best women's players in

the world," she said. "We played against her in the 1993 World Cup, which we won, and last summer, when New Zealand came over here and beat us."

"Since the World Cup she has been devastating teams virtually on her own. She is a powerful stroke-maker, a more than useful swing bowler and has a good pair of hands."

Drumm said: "I suppose it was unlucky the catch went to me. It wouldn't have mattered if it had been someone else. It's a nice honour to catch on Mike Atherton, but I misjudged the ball and nearly wore it in the gob."

"I sort of feel sorry for him. He hasn't been the happiest chap out there today and I haven't seen him smiling too much, but he's probably got a lot on his mind at the moment."



No 985

- ACROSS: 1 Ensa 3 Unofficial 5 Vary 9 Baldness 11 Sunday best 14 Greedy 15 Arches 17 Fifth helmet 20 Baritone 21 Ble 22 Enhanced 23 Uper
- DOWN: 1 Envy 2 Sprinter 4 Shabby 5 Indivisible 6 Hex 7 Dusk 10 Hard-bitten 12 Thumbs up 13 As-it were 16 Chance 18 Able 19 Mr WH

SOLUTION TO TIMES TWO CROSSWORD 980
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ACROSS: 6 Fragile 7 Clump 9 Lion 10 Lantern 11 Curry favour 14 Cold comfort 17 Tensile 19 Sabre 21 Yearn 22 Aridity

DOWN: 1 Sans 2 Historic 3 Medley 4 Scan 5 Barefoot 6 Fil 8 Penny 11 Cuckoo 12 Acoustic 13 Scatty 15 May/July 16 Lely 18 Iona 20 Blip

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The President's Putter, due to start tomorrow at Rye Golf Club, has been postponed. The amateur event, for members of the Oxford and Cambridge Golfing Society, will now take place from February 21 to 24.

Held early each year, the Putter is often affected by bad weather. The last time it was cancelled was 1975, but, as recently as 1993, the final was abandoned because of high winds after only five holes had been played.

Clifford Weight, the secretary of the society, said: "There are three inches of snow on some parts of the fairways, so it would be impossible not to lose the ball. The forecast is bad. No thaw is due."

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